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THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON

VOLUME VI

Outdoor Studies
Poems

BY

Thomas Wentworth Higginson

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MDCCCC

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE prose essays in this volume were written, with hardly an exception, while the author was a resident of Worcester, Massachusetts, and were published originally in the "Atlantic Monthly" magazine. They were reprinted, in part, in a volume called "Outdoor Papers," and some of them in an illustrated volume entitled "In a Fair Country," with illustrations by Miss Irene E. Jerome, and again in a volume called "The Procession of the Flowers, and Other Essays," with a frontispiece by Mrs. Arthur B. Marsh.

The poems, on the other hand, were written during a long series of years and in many different places. Most of them have been previously published, either in a volume called "The Afternoon Landscape" or in one entitled "Such as They Are."

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., April 5, 1900.

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OUTDOOR STUDIES

I

SAINTS, AND THEIR BODIES

EVER since the time of that dyspeptic heathen, Plotinus, the saints have been "ashamed of their bodies." What is worse, they have usually had reason for the shame. Of the four famous Latin fathers, Jerome describes his own limbs as misshapen, his skin as squalid, his bones as scarcely holding together; while Gregory the Great speaks in his Epistles of his own large size, as contrasted with his weakness and infirmities. Three of the four Greek fathers — Chrysostom, Basil, and Gregory Nazianzen — ruined their health early, and were invalids for the remainder of their days. Three only of the whole eight were able-bodied men, — Ambrose, Augustine, and Athanasius; and the permanent influence of these three has been far greater, for good or for evil, than that of all the others put together.

Robust military saints there have doubtless

been in the Roman Catholic Church : George, Michael, Sebastian, Eustace, Martin, Hubert the Hunter, and Christopher the Christian Hercules. But these have always held a very secondary place in canonization. Maurice and his whole Theban legion also were sainted together, to the number of six thousand six hundred and sixty-six ; doubtless they were stalwart men, but there never yet has been a chapel erected to one of them. The mediæval type of sanctity was a strong soul in a weak body ; and it could be intensified either by strengthening the one or by further debilitating the other. The glory lay in contrast, not in combination. Yet, to do them justice, they conceded a strong and stately beauty to their female saints, — Catherine, Agnes, Agatha, Barbara, Cecilia, and the rest. It was reserved for the modern Pre-Raphaelites to attempt the combination of a maximum of saintliness with a minimum of pulmonary and digestive capacity.

But, indeed, from that earlier day to this, the saints by spiritual laws have usually been sinners against physical laws, and the artists have merely followed the examples they found. Vasari records, that Carotto's masterpiece of painting, "The Three Archangels," at Verona, was criticised because the limbs of the angels were too slender, and Carotto, true to his con-

ventional standard, replied, "Then they will fly the better." Saints have been flying to heaven, for the same reason, ever since, — and have commonly flown young.

Indeed, the earlier some such saints cast off their bodies the better, they make so little use of them. Chittagutta, the Buddhist recluse, dwelt in a cave in Ceylon. His devout visitors one day remarked on the miraculous beauty of the legendary paintings, representing scenes from the life of Buddha, which adorned the walls. The holy man informed them that, during his sixty years' residence in the cave, he had been too much absorbed in meditation to notice the existence of the paintings, but he would take their word for it. And in this non-intercourse with the visible world there has been an apostolical succession, extending from Chittagutta down to the Andover divinity student who refused to join his companions in their admiring gaze on that wonderful autumnal landscape which spreads itself before the Seminary Hill in October; but marched back into the library, ejaculating, "Lord, turn thou mine eyes from beholding vanity!"

It is to be reluctantly recorded, in fact, that the Protestant saints have not ordinarily had much to boast of, in physical stamina, as compared with the Roman Catholic. They have not

got far beyond Plotinus. It is scarcely worth while to quote Calvin on this point, for he, as everybody knows, was an invalid for his whole lifetime. But it does seem hard that the jovial Luther, in the midst of his ale and skittles, should have deliberately censured Juvenal's *mens sana in corpore sano*, as a pagan maxim. If Saint Luther fails us, where are the advocates of the body to look for comfort? Nothing this side of ancient Greece, it is to be feared, will afford adequate examples of the union of saintly souls and strong bodies. Pythagoras the sage may or may not have been identical with Pythagoras the inventor of pugilism, and he was, at any rate, — in the loving words of Bentley, — "a lusty proper man, and built, as it were, to make a good boxer." Cleanthes, whose sublime "Prayer" is, doubtless, the highest strain left of early piety, was a boxer likewise. Plato was a famous wrestler, and Socrates was unequalled for his military endurance. Nor was one of these, like their puny follower Plotinus, too weak-sighted to revise his own manuscripts.

It would be tedious to analyze the causes of this modern deterioration of the saints. The fact is clear. There is in the community an impression that physical vigor and spiritual sanctity are incompatible. New England ecclesiastical history records that a young Orthodox

divine lost his parish by swimming the Merrimack River, and that another was compelled to ask a dismissal in consequence of vanquishing his most influential parishioner in a game of ten-pins ; it seemed to the beaten party very unclerical. The writer further remembers a match, in a certain seaside bowling-alley, in which two brothers, young divines, took part. The sides being made up, with the exception of these two players, it was necessary to find places for them also. The head of one side accordingly picked his man, on the avowed presumption that the best preacher would naturally be the worst bowler. The athletic capacity, he thought, would be in inverse ratio to the sanctity. It is a satisfaction to add, that in this case his hopes were signally disappointed ; but it shows which way the popular impression lies.

The poets have probably assisted in maintaining the delusion. How many cases of consumption Wordsworth must have accelerated by his assertion that " the good die first " ! Happily he lived to disprove his own maxim. Professor Peirce has proved by statistics that the best scholars in our colleges survive the rest ; and virtue, like intellect, doubtless tends to longevity. The experience of the literary class shows that all excess is destructive, and that we need the harmonious action of all the faculties. Of

the brilliant roll of the "young men of 1830," in Paris, — Balzac, Soulié, De Musset, De Bernard, Sue, and their compeers, — nearly every one perished in the prime of life. What is the explanation? A stern one: opium, tobacco, wine, and licentiousness. "All died of softening of the brain or spinal marrow, or swelling of the heart." No doubt many of the noble and the pure were dying prematurely at the same time; but it proceeded from the same essential cause: physical laws disobeyed and bodies exhausted. The evil is that what in the debauchee is condemned as suicide, is lauded in the devotee as saintship. The *delirium tremens* of the drunkard conveys scarcely a sterner moral lesson than the second childishness of the pure and abstemious Southey.

But, happily, times change, and saints with them. Our moral conceptions are expanding to take in that "athletic virtue" of the Greeks, ἀρετὴ γυμναστική, which Dr. Arnold, by precept and practice, defended. It is good news, for certainly this is as it should be. One of the most potent causes of the ill-concealed alienation between the clergy and the people, in our community, has been the supposed deficiency, on the part of the former, of a vigorous, manly life. There is a certain moral and physical *anhæmia*, a bloodlessness, which separates most

of our saints, more effectually than a cloister, from the strong life of the age. What satirists upon religion are those parents who say of their pallid, puny, sedentary, lifeless, joyless little offspring, "He is born for a minister;" while the ruddy, the brave, and the strong are as promptly assigned to a secular career! Never yet did an ill-starred young saint waste his Saturday afternoons in preaching sermons in the garret to his deluded little sisters and their dolls, without living to repent it in maturity. These precocious little sentimentalists wither away like blanched potato-plants in a cellar; and then comes some vigorous youth from his outdoor work or play, and grasps the rudder of the age, as he grasped the oar, the bat, or the plough.

Everybody admires the physical training of military and naval schools. But these same persons never seem to imagine that the body is worth cultivating for any purpose, except to annihilate the bodies of others. Yet it needs more training to preserve life than to destroy it. The vocation of a literary man is far more perilous than that of a frontier dragoon. The latter dies at most but once, by an Indian bullet; the former dies daily, unless he is warned in time, and takes occasional refuge in the saddle and the prairie with the dragoon. What

battle-piece is so pathetic as Browning's "Grammarian's Funeral"? Do not waste your gymnastics on the West Point or Annapolis student, whose whole life will be one of active exercise, but bring them into the professional schools and the counting-rooms. Whatever may be the exceptional cases, the stern truth remains, that the great deeds of the world can be more easily done by illiterate men than by sickly ones. Wisely said Horace Mann, "All through the life of a pure-minded but feeble-bodied man, his path is lined with memory's gravestones, which mark the spots where noble enterprises perished, for lack of physical vigor to embody them in deeds." And yet more finely it has been said by a younger American thinker, Wasson, "Intellect in a weak body is like gold in a spent swimmer's pocket, — the richer he would be, under other circumstances, by so much the greater his danger now."

Of course, the mind has immense control over physical endurance, and every one knows that among soldiers, sailors, emigrants, and woodsmen, the leaders, though more delicately nurtured, will often endure hardship better than the followers, — "because," says Sir Philip Sidney, "they are supported by the great appetites of honor." But for all these triumphs of nervous power a reaction lies in store, as in the

case of the superhuman efforts often made by delicate women. And besides, there is a point beyond which no mental heroism can ignore the body, — as, for instance, in sea-sickness and toothache. Can virtue arrest consumption, or self-devotion set free the agonized breath of asthma, or heroic energy defy paralysis? More formidable still are those subtle influences of disease which cannot be resisted because their source is unseen. Voltaire declared that the fate of a nation had often depended on the good or bad digestion of a prime minister; and Motley holds that the gout of Charles V. changed the destinies of the world.

But part of the religious press still clings to the objection, that admiration of physical strength belonged to the barbarous ages of the world. So it certainly did, and thus the race was kept alive through those ages. They had that one merit, at least; and so surely as an exclusively intellectual civilization ignored it, the arm of some robust barbarian prostrated that civilization at last. What Sismondi says of courage is preëminently true of that bodily vigor which it usually presupposes: it is by no means the first of virtues, but its loss is more fatal than that of all others. "Were it possible to unite the advantages of a perfect government with the cowardice of a whole

people, those advantages would be utterly valueless, since they would be utterly without security."

Physical health is a necessary condition of all permanent success. To the American people it has a stupendous importance, because it is the only attribute of power in which they are said to be losing ground. Guarantee us against physical degeneracy, and we can risk all other perils, — financial crises, Slavery, Romanism, Mormonism, Border Ruffians, and New York assassins; "domestic malice, foreign levy, nothing" can daunt us. Guarantee to Americans health, and Mrs. Stowe cannot frighten them with all the prophecies of Dred; but when her sister Catherine informs us that in all the vast female acquaintance of the Beecher family there are not a dozen healthy women, one is a little tempted to despair of the republic.

The one drawback upon our public-school system has been the physical weakness which it revealed and perhaps helps to perpetuate. One seldom notices a ruddy face in the schoolroom without tracing it back to a Transatlantic origin. The teacher of a large school in Canada went so far as to declare to me that she could recognize the children born this side the line by their invariable appearance of compara-

tive ill-health joined with intellectual precocity, — stamina wanting, and the place supplied by equations. Look at a class of boys or girls in our grammar schools; a glance along the line of their backs sometimes affords a study of geometrical curves. You almost long to reverse the position of their heads, as Dante has those of the false prophets, and thus improve their figures; the rounded shoulders affording a vigorous chest, and the hollow chest an excellent back.

There are statistics to show that the average length of human life is increasing; and facts to indicate a development of size and strength with advancing civilization. Indeed, it is generally supposed that any physical deterioration is local, being peculiar to the United States. But the "Englishwoman's Journal" asserts that "it is allowed by all, that the appearance of the English peasant, in the present day, is very different to [from] what it was fifty years ago; the robust, healthy, hard-looking countrywoman or girl is as rare now as the pale, delicate, nervous female of our times would have been a century ago." And the writer proceeds to give alarming illustrations, based upon the appearance of children in English schools, both in city and country.

All this may be met by the alleged distinction

between a good idle constitution and a good working constitution, — since the latter often belongs to persons who make no show of physical powers. But this only means that there are different temperaments and types of physical organization, while within the limits of each the distinction between a healthy and a diseased condition still holds ; and it is that alone which is essential.

More specious is the claim of the Fourth-of-July orators, that, health or no health, it is the sallow Americans, and not the robust English, who are really leading the world. But this, again, is a question of temperaments. The Englishman concedes the greater intensity, but prefers a more solid and permanent power. He justly sets the noble masonry and vast canals of Montreal against the Aladdin's palaces of Chicago. "I observe," admits the Englishman, "that an American can accomplish more, at a single effort, than any other man on earth ; but I also observe that he exhausts himself in the achievement. Kane, a delicate invalid, astounds the world by his two Arctic winters, — and then dies in tropical Cuba." The solution is simple ; nervous energy is grand, and so is muscular power ; combine the two, and you move the world.

One may assume as admitted, therefore, the

deficiency of physical health in America, and the need of a great amendment. Into the general question of cause and cure it is not here needful to enter. In view of the vast variety of special theories, and the inadequacy of any one, — or any dozen, — it is wiser to forbear. Perhaps the best diagnosis of the common American disease is to be found in Andral's famous description of the cholera: "Anatomical characteristics, insufficient; — cause, mysterious; — nature, hypothetical; — symptoms, characteristic; — diagnosis, easy; — *treatment, very doubtful.*"

A great physician has said, "I know not which is most indispensable for the support of the frame, — food or exercise." But who in this community really takes exercise? Even the mechanic commonly confines himself to one set of muscles; the blacksmith acquires strength in his right arm, and the dancing-master in his left leg. But the professional or business man, what muscles has he at all? The tradition, that Phidippides ran from Athens to Sparta, one hundred and twenty miles, in two days, seems to us Americans as mythical as the Golden Fleece. Even to ride sixty miles in a day, to walk thirty, to run five, or to swim one, would cost most men among us a fit of illness, and some their lives. Let any man test his

physical condition, either, if he likes work, by sawing his own cord of wood, or, if he prefers play, by an hour in the gymnasium or at cricket, and his enfeebled muscular apparatus will groan with rheumatism for a week. Or let him test the strength of his arms and chest by raising and lowering himself a few times upon a horizontal bar, or hanging by the arms to a rope, and he will probably agree with Galen in pronouncing it *robustum validumque laborem.* Yet so manifestly are these things within the reach of common constitutions, that a few weeks or months of judicious practice will renovate his whole system, and the most vigorous exercise will refresh him like a cold bath.

To a well-regulated frame, mere physical exertion, even for an uninteresting object, is a great enjoyment, which is, of course, increased by the excitement of games and sports. To almost every man there is joy in the memory of these things ; they are the happiest associations of his boyhood. It does not occur to him that he also might be as happy as a child if he lived more like one. What do most men know of the "wild joys of living," the daily zest and luxury of outdoor existence, in which every healthy boy beside them revels ? — skating, while the orange sky of sunset dies away over the delicate tracery of gray branches, and the

throbbing feet pause in their tingling motion, and the frosty air is filled with the shrill sound of distant steel, the resounding of the ice, and the echoes up the hillsides? — or sailing, beating up against a stiff breeze, with the waves thumping under the bow, as if a dozen sea-gods had laid their heads together to resist it? — or climbing tall trees, where the higher foliage, closing around, cures the dizziness which began below, and one feels as if he had left a coward beneath and found a hero above? — or the joyous hour of crowded life in football or cricket? — or the gallant glories of riding, and the jubilee of swimming?

It is safe to cling still to the belief that the Persian curriculum of studies — to ride, to shoot, and to speak the truth — is the better part of a boy's education. As the urchin is undoubtedly physically safer for having learned to turn a somerset and fire a gun, perilous though these feats appear to mothers, so his soul is made healthier, larger, freer, stronger, by hours and days of manly exercise and copious draughts of open air, at whatever risk of idle habits and bad companions. Even if the balance is sometimes lost, and play prevails, what matter? It was a pupil of William Wells who wrote

> "The hours the idle schoolboy squandered
> The man would die ere he 'd forget."

When will parents and teachers learn to regard mental precocity as a disaster to be shunned, instead of a glory to be coveted? "Nature," says Tissot, in his "Essay on the Health of Men of Letters," "is unable successfully to carry on two rapid processes at the same time. We attempt a prodigy, and the result is a fool." There was a child in Languedoc who at six years was of the size of a large man; of course his mind was a vacuum. On the other hand, Jean Philippe Baratier was a learned man in his eighth year, and died of apparent old age at twenty. Both were monstrosities, and a healthy childhood would be equidistant from either.

One invaluable merit of outdoor sports is to be found in this, that they afford the best cement for childish friendship. Their associations outlive all others. There is many a man, now perchance hard and worldly, whom one loves to pass in the street simply because in meeting him one meets spring flowers and autumn chestnuts, skates and cricket-balls, cherry-birds and pickerel. There is an indescribable fascination in the gradual transference of these childish companionships into maturer relations. It is pleasant to encounter in the contests of manhood those whom one first met at football, and to follow the profound thoughts of those who always dived deeper, even in the

river, than one's own efforts could attain. There is a certain governor, of whom I personally can remember only that he found the Fresh Pond heronry, which I vainly sought; and in memory the august sheriff of a neighboring county still skates in victorious pursuit of me, — fit emblem of swift-footed justice! — on the black ice of the same once lovely lake. My imagination crowns the Cambridge poet, and the Cambridge sculptor, not with their later laurels, but with the willows out of which they taught me to carve whistles, shriller than any trump of fame, in the happy days when Mount Auburn was Sweet Auburn still.

Luckily, boy-nature is too strong for theory. And truth demands the admission, that physical education is not so entirely neglected among us as the scarcity of popular games would indicate. It is very possible that this last fact proceeds partly from the greater freedom of field-sports in this country. There are few New England boys who do not become familiar with the rod or gun in childhood. Perhaps, in the mother country, the monopoly of land interferes with this, and thus game laws, by a sort of spontaneous pun, tend to introduce games.

But, so far as there is a deficiency in these respects among us, this generation must not shrink from the responsibility. It is unfair to

charge it on the Puritans. They are not even answerable for Massachusetts ; for there is no doubt that athletic exercises, of some sort, were far more generally practised in this community before the Revolution than at present. A state of almost constant Indian warfare then created an obvious demand for muscle and agility. At present there is no such immediate necessity, and it has been supposed that a race of shopkeepers, brokers, and lawyers could live without bodies. Now that the terrible records of dyspepsia and paralysis are disproving this, one may hope for a reaction in favor of bodily exercises. When we once begin the competition, there seems no reason why any other nation should surpass us. The wide area of our country, and its variety of surface and shore, offer a corresponding range of physical training. Contrast our various aquatic opportunities, for instance. It is one thing to steer a pleasure-boat with a rudder, and another to steer a dory with an oar; one thing to paddle a birch canoe, and another to paddle a ducking float; in a Charles River club-boat, the post of honor is in the stern, — in a Penobscot *bateau*, in the bow; and each of these experiences educates a different set of muscles. Add to this the constitutional American receptiveness, which welcomes new pursuits without distinction of origin, —

unites German gymnastics with English sports and sparring, and takes the red Indians for instructors in paddling and running. With these various aptitudes, we certainly ought to become a nation of athletes.

Thus it is that, in one way or another, American schoolboys obtain active exercise. The same is true, in a very limited degree, even of girls. They are occasionally, in our larger cities, sent to gymnasiums, — the more the better. Dancing-schools are better than nothing, though all the attendant circumstances are usually unfavorable. A fashionable young lady is estimated to traverse her three hundred miles a season on foot; and this implies training. But outdoor exercise for girls is even now restricted, first by their costume, and secondly by the social proprieties. All young female animals unquestionably require as much motion as their brothers, and naturally make as much noise: but what mother would not be shocked, in the case of her girl of twelve, by one half the activity and uproar which are recognized as being the breath of life to her twin brother?

It is beyond question, that far more outdoor exercise is habitually taken by the female population of almost all European countries than by our own. In the first place, the peasant women of those countries are trained to field labor from

childhood; and among the higher classes systematic training takes the place of these things. Miss Beecher glowingly describes a Russian female seminary, in which nine hundred girls of the noblest families were being trained by Ling's system of calisthenics, and her informant declared that she never beheld such an array of girlish health and beauty. Englishwomen, again, have horsemanship and pedestrianism, in which their ordinary feats appear to our healthy women incredible. Thus, Mary Lamb writes to Miss Wordsworth, — both ladies being between fifty and sixty, — "You say you can walk fifteen miles with ease; that is exactly my stint, and more fatigues me;" and then speaks pityingly of a delicate lady who could accomplish only "four or five miles every third or fourth day, keeping very quiet between." How few American ladies, in the fulness of their strength (if feminine strength among us has any fulness), can surpass this English invalid!

But even among American men, how few carry athletic habits into manhood! The great hindrance, no doubt, is absorption in business. But in most places there is the further obstacle, that a certain stigma of boyishness goes with outdoor sports. So early does this begin, that the writer remembers, in his teens, to have been

slightly reproached with juvenility, for still clinging to football, though a Senior Sophister. Juvenility! He only wishes he had the opportunity now. Mature men are, of course, intended to take not less but more of active exercise than boys. Some physiologists go so far as to demand six hours of outdoor life daily; and it is absurd to complain that we have not the healthy animal happiness of children, while we forswear their simple sources of pleasure.

Most of the exercise habitually taken by men of sedentary pursuits is in the form of walking. Its merits may be easily overrated. Walking is to real exercise what vegetable food is to animal; it satisfies the appetite, but the nourishment is not sufficiently concentrated to be invigorating. It takes a man outdoors, and it uses his muscles, and therefore of course it is good; but it is not the best kind of good. Walking, for walking's sake, becomes tedious. We must not ignore the play-impulse in human nature, which, according to Schiller, is the foundation of all Art. In girls' boarding-schools, teachers uniformly testify to the aversion of pupils to the prescribed walk. Give them a sled, or a pair of skates, or a rowboat, or put them on horseback, and they will protract the period of exercise till the complaint is transferred to the preceptor.

Gymnastic exercises have two disadvantages: one, in being commonly performed under cover — though this may sometimes prove an advantage as well; another, in requiring apparatus, and at first a teacher. Apart from these, perhaps no other form of exercise is so universally invigorating. A teacher is required, less for the sake of stimulus than of precaution. The tendency is almost always to dare too much; and there is also need of a daily moderation in commencing exercises; for the wise pupil will always prefer to supple his muscles by mild exercises and calisthenics, before proceeding to harsher performances on the bars and ladders. With this precaution, strains are easily avoided; even with this, the hand will sometimes blister and the body ache, but perseverance will cure the one and Russia Salve the other; and the invigorated life in every limb will give a perpetual charm to those seemingly aimless leaps and somersets. The feats once learned, a private gymnasium can easily be constructed, of the simplest apparatus, and so daily used; though nothing can wholly supply the stimulus afforded by a class in a public institution, with a competent teacher. In summer, the whole thing can partially be dispensed with; but it is hard for me to imagine how any young person gets through the winter happily without a gymnasium.

It may seem to our non-resistant friends to be going rather far, if we should indulge our saints in taking boxing lessons; yet it is not long since a New York clergyman saved his life in Broadway by the judicious administration of a "cross-counter" or a "flying crook," and we have not heard of his excommunication from the Church Militant. No doubt, a laudable aversion prevails, in this country, to the English practices of pugilism; yet it must be remembered that sparring is, by its very name, a "science of self-defence;" and if a gentleman wishes to know how to hold a rude antagonist at bay, in any emergency, and keep out of an undignified scuffle, the means are most easily afforded him by the art which Pythagoras founded. Apart from this, boxing exercises every muscle in the body, and gives a wonderful quickness to eye and hand. These same remarks apply, though in a minor degree, to fencing also.

Passing now to outdoor exercises, — and no one should confine himself to indoor ones, — one must hold with the Thalesian school, and rank water first. Vishnu Sarma gives, in his apologues, the characteristics of the fit place for a wise man to live in, and enumerates among its necessities first "a Rajah" and then "a river." Democracies can dispense with the first, but not

with the second. A square mile even of pond water is worth a year's schooling to any intelligent boy. A boat is a kingdom. I personally own one, — a mere flat-bottomed "float" with a centreboard. It has seen service, — it is eight years old, — has spent two winters under the ice, and has been fished in by boys every day for as many summers. It grew at last so hopelessly leaky that even the boys disdained it. It cost seven dollars originally, and I would not sell it to-day for seventeen, except with a view to buying another. To own the poorest boat is better than hiring the best. It is a link to Nature; without a boat, one is so much the less a man.

Sailing is of course delicious; it is as good as flying to steer anything with wings of canvas, whether one stand by the wheel of a clipper-ship, or by the clumsy stern-oar of a "gundalow." But rowing has also its charms; and the Indian noiselessness of the paddle, beneath the fringing branches of the Assabeth or Artichoke, puts one into Fairyland at once, and Hiawatha's *cheemaun* becomes a possible possession. Rowing is peculiarly graceful and appropriate as a feminine exercise, and any able-bodied girl can learn to handle one light oar at the first lesson, and two at the second.

Swimming has also a birdlike charm of mo-

tion. The novel element, the free action, the abated drapery, give a sense of personal contact with Nature which nothing else so fully bestows. No later triumph of existence is so fascinating, perhaps, as that in which the boy first wins his panting way across the deep gulf that severs one green bank from another, ten yards, perhaps, and feels himself thenceforward lord of the watery world. The Athenian phrase for a man who knew nothing was that he could "neither read nor swim." Yet there is a vast amount of this ignorance; the majority of sailors, it is said, cannot swim a stroke; and in a late lake disaster, many able-bodied men perished by drowning, in calm water, only half a mile from shore. At our watering-places it is rare to see a swimmer venture out more than a rod or two, though this proceeds partly from the fear of sharks, — as if sharks of the dangerous order were not far more afraid of the rocks than the swimmers of being eaten. But the fact of the timidity is unquestionable; and I was told by a certain clerical frequenter of a watering-place, himself an athlete, that he had never met but two companions who would swim boldly out with him, both being ministers, and one a distinguished ex-president of Brown University. This fact must certainly be placed to the credit of the bodies of our saints.

But, after all, the secret charm of all these sports and studies is simply this, — that they bring us into more familiar intercourse with Nature. They give us that *vitam sub divo* in which the Roman exulted, — those outdoor days, which, say the Arabs, are not to be reckoned in the length of life. Nay, to a true lover of the open air, night beneath its curtain is as beautiful as day. The writer has personally camped out under a variety of auspices, — before a fire of pine logs in the forests of Maine, beside a blaze of faya-boughs on the steep side of a foreign volcano, and beside no fire at all — except a possible one of Sharp's rifles — in that domestic volcano, Kansas; and every such remembrance is worth many nights of indoor slumber. There is never a week in the year, nor an hour of day or night, which has not, in the open air, its own special interest. One need not say, with Reade's Australians, that the only use of a house is to sleep in the lee of it; but one might do worse. As for rain, it is chiefly formidable indoors. Lord Bacon used to ride with uncovered head in a shower, and loved "to feel the spirit of the universe upon his brow;" and I once knew an enthusiastic hydropathic physician who loved to expose himself in thunderstorms at midnight, without a shred of earthly clothing between himself and

the atmosphere. Some prudent persons may possibly regard this as being rather an extreme, while yet their own extreme of avoidance of every breath from heaven is really the more extravagantly unreasonable of the two.

It is easy for the sentimentalist to say, "But if the object is, after all, the enjoyment of Nature, why not go and enjoy her, without any collateral aim?" Because it is the universal experience of man, that, if we have a collateral aim, we enjoy her far more. He knows not the beauty of the universe who has not learned the subtile mystery, that Nature loves to work on us by indirections. Astronomers say that, when observing with the naked eye, you see a star less clearly by looking at it than by looking at the next one. Margaret Fuller's fine saying touches the same point, — "Nature will not be stared at." Go out merely to enjoy her, and it seems a little tame, and you begin to suspect yourself of affectation. There are persons who, after years of abstinence from athletic sports or the pursuits of the naturalist or artist, have resumed them, simply in order to restore to the woods and the sunsets the zest of the old fascination. Go out under pretence of shooting on the marshes or botanizing in the forests; study birds or butterflies; go to paint a red maple-leaf in autumn, or watch a pickerel-

line in winter; meet Nature on the cricket-ground or at the regatta; swim with her, ride with her, run with her, and she gladly takes you back once more within the horizon of her magic, and your heart of manhood is born again into more than the fresh happiness of the boy.

NOTE.—This essay appeared originally in the *Atlantic Monthly* of March, 1858, and was thus simultaneous with that great development of athletic exercises in the United States which began about that time, — a tendency in which this essay was credited with having had, perhaps, some small share. Some of its more extreme statements have therefore been modified in the present reprint, leaving mainly what is still significant.

II

THE PROCESSION OF THE FLOWERS

In Cuba there is a blossoming shrub whose multitudinous crimson flowers are so seductive to the hummingbirds that they hover all day around it buried in its blossoms until petal and wing seem one. At first upright, the gorgeous bells droop downward, and fall unwithered to the ground, and are thence called by the Creoles "Cupid's Tears." Fredrika Bremer relates that daily she brought home handfuls of these blossoms to her chamber, and nightly they all disappeared. One morning she looked toward the wall of the apartment, and there, in a long crimson line, the delicate flowers went ascending one by one to the ceiling, and passed from sight. She found that each was borne laboriously onward by a little colorless ant much smaller than itself: the bearer was invisible, but the lovely burdens festooned the wall with beauty.

To a watcher from the sky, the march of the flowers of any zone across the year would seem as beautiful as that West Indian pageant.

These frail creatures, rooted where they stand, a part of the "still life" of Nature, yet share her ceaseless motion. In the most sultry silence of summer noons, the vital current is coursing with desperate speed through the innumerable veins of every leaflet, and the apparent stillness, like the sleeping of a child's top, is in truth the very ecstasy of perfected motion.

Not in the tropics only, but even in England, whence most of our floral associations and traditions come, the march of the flowers is in an endless circle, and, unlike our experience, something is always in bloom. In the northern United States, it is said, the active growth of most plants is condensed into ten weeks, while in the mother country the full activity is maintained through sixteen. But even the English winter does not seem to be a winter in the same sense as ours, appearing more like a chilly and comfortless autumn. There is no month in the English year when some special plant does not bloom: the Coltsfoot there opens its fragrant flowers from December to February; the yellow-flowered Hellebore, and its cousin, the sacred Christmas Rose of Glastonbury, extend from January to March; and the Snowdrop and Primrose often come before the first of February. Something may be gained, much lost, by that perennial succession; those links,

however slight, must make the floral period continuous to the imagination; while our year gives a pause and an interval to its children, and after exhausted October has effloresced into Witch-hazel, there is an absolute reserve of blossom until the Alders wave again.

No symbol could so well represent Nature's first yielding in springtime as this blossoming of the Alder, the drooping of the tresses of these tender things. Before the frost is gone, and while the new-born season is yet too weak to assert itself by actually uplifting anything, it can at least let fall these blossoms, one by one, till they wave defiance to the winter on a thousand boughs. How patiently they have waited! Men are perplexed with anxieties about their own immortality; but these catkins, which hang, almost full-formed, above the ice all winter, show no such solicitude, though when March wooes them they are ready. Once relaxing, their pollen is so prompt to fall that it sprinkles your hand as you gather them; then, for one day, they are the perfection of grace upon your table, and next day they are weary and emaciated, and their little contribution to the spring is done.

Then many eyes watch for the opening of the Mayflower, day by day, and a few for the Hepatica. So marked and fantastic are the

local preferences of our native plants, that, with miles of woods and meadows open to their choice, each selects only some few spots for its accustomed abodes, and some one among them all for its very earliest blossoming. There is often a single chosen nook, which you might almost cover with your handkerchief, where each flower seems to bloom earliest without variation, year by year. I know one such place for Hepatica a mile northeast, — another for Mayflower two miles southwest; and each year the whimsical creature is in bloom on that little spot when not another flower can be found open through the whole country round. Accidental as the choice may appear, it is undoubtedly based on laws more eternal than the stars; yet why all subtle influences conspire to bless that undistinguishable knoll no man can say. Another and similar puzzle offers itself in the distribution of the tints of flowers, — in these two species among the rest. There are certain localities, near by, where the Hepatica is all but white, and others where the Mayflower is sumptuous in pink; yet it is not traceable to wet or dry, sun or shadow, and no agricultural chemistry can disclose the secret. Is it by some Darwinian law of selection that the white Hepatica has utterly overpowered the blue, in our Cascade Woods, for instance, while yet in

the very midst of this pale plantation a single clump will sometimes bloom with all heaven on its petals? Why can one recognize the Plymouth Mayflower, as soon as seen, by its wondrous depth of color? Perhaps it blushes with triumph to see how Nature has outwitted the Pilgrims, and has even succeeded in preserving her deer like an English duke, since she still maintains the deepest woods in Massachusetts precisely where those sturdy immigrants first began their clearings.

The Hepatica (called also Liverwort, Squirrel-Cup, or Blue Anemone) has been found in Worcester as early as March 17, and in Danvers on March 12, — dates which appear almost the extreme of credibility. Our next wild-flower in this region is the Claytonia, or Spring Beauty, which is common in the Middle States, but here found in only a few localities. It is the Indian *Miskodeed*, and was said to have been left behind when mighty Peboan, the Winter, was melted by the breath of Spring. It is an exquisitely delicate little creature, bears its blossoms in clusters, unlike most of the early species, and opens in gradual succession each white and pink-veined bell. It grows in moist places on the sunny edges of woods, and prolongs its shy career from about the 10th of April until almost the end of May.

A week farther into April, and the Bloodroot opens, — a name of guilt and a type of innocence. This fresh and lovely thing appears to concentrate all its stains within its ensanguined root, that it may condense all purity in the peculiar whiteness of its petals. It emerges from the ground with each shy blossom wrapped in its own pale green leaf, then doffs the cloak and spreads its long petals round a group of yellow stamens. The flower falls apart so easily that when in full bloom it will hardly bear transportation, but with a touch the stem stands naked, a bare, gold-tipped sceptre amid drifts of snow. And the contradiction of its hues seems carried into its habits. One of the most shy of wild plants, easily banished from its locality by any invasion, it yet takes to the garden with unpardonable readiness, doubles its size, blossoms earlier, repudiates its love of water, and flaunts its great leaves in the unnatural confinement, until it elbows out the exotics. Its charm is gone, unless one find it in its native haunts, beside some cascade which streams over rocks that are dark with moisture, green with moss, and snowy with white bubbles. Each spray of dripping feather-moss exudes a tiny torrent of its own, or braided with some tiny neighbor, above the little waterfonts which sleep sunless in ever-verdant caves.

Sometimes along these emerald canals there comes a sudden rush and hurry, as if some anxious housekeeper upon the hill above were afraid that things were not stirring fast enough, — and then again the waving and sinuous lines of water are quieted to a serener flow. The delicious red thrush and the busy little yellow-throat are not yet come to this their summer haunt; but all day long the answering field sparrows trill out their sweet, shy, accelerating lay.

In the same localities with the Bloodroot, though some days later, grows the Dogtooth Violet, — a name hopelessly inappropriate, but likely never to be changed. These hardy and prolific creatures have also many localities of their own; for, though they do not acquiesce in cultivation, like the sycophantic Bloodroot, yet they are hard to banish from their native haunts, but linger after the woods are cleared and the meadow drained. The bright flowers blaze back all the yellow light of noonday, as the gay petals curl and spread themselves above their beds of mottled leaves; but it is always a disappointment to gather them, for indoors they miss the full ardor of the sunbeams, and are apt to go to sleep and nod expressionless from the stalk.

And almost on the same day with this bright

apparition one may greet a multitude of concurrent visitors, arriving so accurately together that it is almost a matter of accident which of the party shall first report himself. Perhaps the Dandelion should have the earliest place; indeed, I once found it in Brookline on the 7th of April. But it cannot ordinarily be expected before the 20th, in Eastern Massachusetts, and rather later in the interior; while by the same date I have also found near Boston the Cowslip, or Marsh Marigold, the Spring Saxifrage, the Anemones, the Violets, the Bellwort, the Houstonia, the Cinquefoil, and the Strawberry blossom. Varying, of course, in different spots and years, the arrival of this coterie is yet nearly simultaneous, and they may all be expected hereabouts before May Day at the very latest. After all, in spite of the croakers, this festival could not have been much better timed; for the delicate blossoms which mark the period are usually in perfection on this day, and it is not long before they are past their prime.

Some early plants which have now almost disappeared from Eastern Massachusetts are still found near Worcester in the greatest abundance, — as the larger Yellow Violet, the Red Trillium, the dwarf Ginseng, the Clintonia or Wild Lily of the Valley, and the pretty

fringed Polygala, which Miss Cooper christened "Gay-Wings." Others, again, are now rare near Worcester, and growing rarer, though still abundant a hundred miles farther inland. In several bits of old, swampy wood one may still find, usually close together, the Hobble-bush and the Painted Trillium, the Mitella, or Bishop's Cap, and the snowy Tiarella. Others still have entirely vanished within ten years, and that in some cases without any adequate explanation. The dainty white Corydalis, profanely called "Dutchman's Breeches," and the quaint, woolly Ledum, or Labrador Tea, have disappeared within that time. The beautiful Linnæa is still found annually, but flowers no more; as is also the case, in all but one distant locality, with the once abundant Rhododendron. Nothing in Nature has for me a more fascinating interest than these secret movements of vegetation, — the sweet, blind instinct with which flowers cling to old domains until absolutely compelled to forsake them. How touching is the fact, now well known, that salt-water plants still flower beside the Great Lakes, yet dreaming of the time when those waters were briny as the sea! Nothing in the demonstrations of geology seems grander than the light thrown by Professor Gray, from the analogies between the flora of Japan and of North America, upon

the successive epochs of heat which led the wandering flowers along the Arctic lands, and of cold which isolated them once more. Yet doubtless these humble movements of our local plants may be laying up results as important, and may hereafter supply evidence of earth's changes upon some smaller scale.

May expands to its prime of beauty; the summer birds come with the fruit blossoms, the gardens are deluged with bloom, and the air with melody, while in the woods the timid spring flowers fold themselves away in silence and give place to a brighter splendor. On the margin of some quiet swamp a myriad of bare twigs seem suddenly overspread with purple butterflies, and we know that the Rhodora is in bloom. Wordsworth never immortalized a flower more surely than Emerson this, and it needs no weaker words; there is nothing else in which the change from nakedness to beauty is so sudden, and when you bring home the great mass of blossoms they appear all ready to flutter away again from your hands and leave you disenchanted.

At the same time the beautiful Cornel-tree is in perfection; startling as a tree of the tropics, it flaunts its great flowers high up among the forest-branches, intermingling its long, slender twigs with theirs, and garnishing them with

alien blooms. It is very available for household decoration, with its four great, creamy petals, — flowers they are not, but floral involucres, — each with a fantastic curl and stain at its tip, as if the fireflies had alighted on them and scorched them; and yet I like it best as it peers out in barbaric splendor from the delicate green of young Maples. And beneath it grows often its more abundant kinsman, the Dwarf Cornel, with the same four great petals enveloping its floral cluster, but lingering low upon the ground, — an herb whose blossoms mimic the statelier tree.

The same rich, creamy hue and texture show themselves in the Wild Calla, which grows at this season in dark, sequestered watercourses, and sometimes well rivals, in all but size, that superb whiteness out of a land of darkness, the Ethiopic Calla of the conservatory. At this season, too, we seek another semi-aquatic rarity, whose homely name cannot deprive it of a certain garden-like elegance, the Buckbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*). This is one of the shy plants which yet grow in profusion within their own domain. I have found it of old in Cambridge, and then upon the pleasant shallows of the Artichoke, that loveliest tributary of the Merrimack, and I have never seen it where it occupied a patch more than a few

yards square, while yet within that space the multitudinous spikes grow always tall and close, reminding one of Hyacinths, when in perfection, but more delicate and beautiful. The only locality I know for it in this vicinity lies seven miles away, where a little inlet from the lower, winding bays of Lake Quinsigamond goes stealing up among a farmer's hayfields, and there, close beside the public road and in full view of the farmhouse, this rare creature fills the water. But to reach it we commonly row down the lake to a sheltered lagoon, separated from the main lake by a long island, which is gradually forming itself like the coral isles, growing each year denser with alder thickets where the kingbirds build; — there we leave the boat among the lily-leaves, and take a lane which winds among the meadows and gives a fitting avenue for the pretty thing we seek. It is not safe to vary many days from the 20th of May, for the plant is not long in perfection, and is past its prime when the lower blossoms begin to wither on the stem.

But should we miss this delicate adjustment of time, it is easy to console ourselves with bright armfuls of Lupine, which bounteously flowers for six weeks along our lakeside, ranging from the 23d of May to the 6th of July. The Lupine is one of our most travelled plants;

for, though never seen off the American continent, it stretches to the Pacific, and is found upon the Arctic coast. On these banks of Lake Quinsigamond it grows in great families, and should be gathered in masses and placed in a vase by itself; for it needs no relief from other flowers, its own soft leaves afford background enough, and though the white variety rarely occurs, yet the varying tints of blue upon the same stalk are a perpetual gratification to the eye. I know not why shaded blues should be so beautiful in flowers, and yet avoided as distasteful in ladies' fancy-work; but it is a mystery like that which long repudiated blue and green from all well-regulated costumes, while Nature yet evidently prefers it to any other combination in her wardrobe.

Another constant ornament of the end of May is the large pink Lady's Slipper, or Moccason Flower, the "Cypripedium not due till to-morrow," which Emerson attributes to the note-book of Thoreau, — to-morrow, in these parts, meaning about the 20th of May. It belongs to the family of Orchids, a high-bred race, fastidious in habits, sensitive as to abodes. Of the ten species named as rarest among American endogenous plants by Dr. Gray, in his valuable essay on the statistics of our northern flora, all but one are Orchids. Even an

abundant species, like the present, retains the family traits in its person, and never loses its high-born air and its delicate veining. I know a grove where it can be gathered by the hundred within a half-acre, and yet I never can divest myself of the feeling that each specimen is a choice novelty. But the actual rarity occurs, at least in this region, when one finds the smaller and more beautiful Yellow Moccason Flower, — *Cypripedium parviflorum*, — which accepts only our very choicest botanical locality, the "Rattlesnake Ledge" on Tatessit Hill, and may, for aught I know, have been the very plant which Elsie Venner laid upon her schoolmistress's desk.

June is an intermediate month between the spring and summer flowers. Of the more delicate early blossoms, the Dwarf Cornel, the Solomon's Seal, and the Yellow Violet still linger in the woods, but rapidly make way for larger masses and more conspicuous hues. The meadows are gorgeous with Clover, Buttercups, and Wild Geranium; but Nature is a little chary for a week or two, maturing a more abundant show. Meanwhile one may afford to take some pains to search for another rarity, almost disappearing from this region, — the lovely Pink Azalea. It still grows plentifully in a few sequestered places, selecting woody swamps to

hide itself; and certainly no shrub suggests, when found, more tropical associations. Those great, nodding, airy, fragrant clusters, tossing far above one's head their slender cups of honey, seem scarcely to belong to our sober zone, any more than the scarlet tanager which sometimes builds its nest beside them. They appear bright exotics, which have wandered into our woods, and are too happy to feel any wish for exit. And just as they fade, their humble sister in white begins to bloom, and carries on through the summer the same intoxicating fragrance.

But when June is at its height, the sculptured chalices of the Mountain Laurel begin to unfold, and thenceforward, for more than a month, extends the reign of this our woodland queen. I know not why one should sigh after the blossoming gorges of the Himalaya, when our forests are all so crowded with this glowing magnificence, — rounding the tangled swamps into smoothness, lighting up the underwoods, overtopping the pastures, lining the rural lanes, and rearing its great, pinkish masses till they meet overhead. The color ranges from the purest white to a perfect rose-pink, and there is an inexhaustible vegetable vigor about the whole thing which puts to shame those tenderer shrubs that shrink before the progress of cultivation.

There is the Rhododendron, for instance, a plant of the same natural family with the Laurel and the Azalea, and looking more robust and woody than either; it once grew in many localities in this region, and still lingers in a few, without consenting either to die or to blossom. There is only one remote place from which any one now brings into our streets those large, luxuriant flowers, waving white above the dark green leaves, and bearing "just a dream of sunset on their edges, and just a breath from the green sea in their hearts." The Laurel, on the other hand, maintains its ground, imperturbable and almost impassable, on every hillside, takes no hints, suspects no danger, and nothing but the most unmistakable onset from spade or axe can diminish its profusion. Gathering it on the most lavish scale seems only to serve as wholesale pruning; nor can I conceive that the Indians, who once ruled over this whole country from Wigwam Hill, could ever have found it more inconveniently abundant than now. We have perhaps no single spot where it grows in such perfect picturesqueness as at "The Laurels," on the Merrimack, just above Newburyport,— a whole hillside scooped out and the hollow piled solidly with flowers; pines curving around its ridge, and the river encircling it below, on which your boat glides

along, while you look up through glimmering arcades of bloom. But for the last half of June laurel monopolizes everything in the Worcester woods, — no one picks anything else; and it fades so slowly that I have found a perfect blossom on the last day of July.

At the same time with this royalty of the woods, the queen of the water ascends her throne, for a reign as undisputed and far more prolonged. The extremes of the Water-Lily in this vicinity, so far as I have known, are the 18th of June and the 13th of October, — a longer range than belongs to any other conspicuous wild-flower, unless we except the Dandelion and Houstonia. It is not only the most fascinating of all flowers to gather, but more available for decorative purposes than almost any other, if it can only be kept fresh. The best method for this purpose, I believe, is to cut the stalk very short before placing in the vase; then, at night, the lily will close and the stalk curl upward; refresh both by changing the water, and in the morning the stalk will be straight and the flower open.

From this time forth Summer has it all her own way. After the 1st of July the yellow flowers begin, matching the yellow fireflies: Hawkweeds, Loosestrifes, Primroses bloom, and the bushy Wild Indigo. The variety of

hues increases ; delicate purple Orchises bloom in their chosen haunts, and Wild Roses blush over hill and dale. On peat-meadows the Adder's-tongue Arethusa (now called Pogonia) flowers profusely, with a faint, delicious perfume, — and its more elegant cousin, the Calopogon, by its side. In this vicinity we miss the blue Harebell, the identical harebell of Ellen Douglas, which I remember as waving its exquisite flowers along the banks of the Merrimack, and again at Brattleborough, below the cascade in the village, where it has climbed the precipitous sides of old buildings, and nods inaccessibly from their crevices, in that picturesque spot, looking down on the hurrying river. But with this exception there is nothing wanting here of the familiar flowers of early summer.

The more closely one studies Nature, the finer her adaptations grow. For instance, the change of seasons is analogous to a change of zones, and summer assimilates our vegetation to that of the tropics. In those lands, Humboldt has remarked, one misses the beauty of wild-flowers in the grass, because the luxuriance of vegetation develops everything into shrubs. The form and color are beautiful, "but, being too high above the soil, they disturb that harmonious proportion which characterizes the

plants of our European meadows. Nature has, in every zone, stamped on the landscape the peculiar type of beauty proper to the locality." But every midsummer reveals the same tendency. In early spring, when all is bare, and small objects are easily made prominent, the wild-flowers are generally delicate. Later, when all verdure is profusely expanded, these miniature strokes would be lost, and Nature then practises landscape gardening in large, lights up the copses with great masses of White Alder, makes the roadsides gay with Aster and Goldenrod, and tops the tall, coarse Meadow Grass with nodding Lilies and tufted Spiræa. One instinctively follows these plain hints, and gathers bouquets sparingly in spring and exuberantly in summer.

The use of wild-flowers for decorative purposes merits a word in passing, for it is unquestionably in favored hands a branch of high art. It is true that we are bidden, on good authority, to love the wood-rose and leave it on its stalk; but against this may be set the saying of Bettine Brentano, that "all flowers which are broken become immortal in the sacrifice;" and certainly the secret harmonies of these fair creatures are so marked and delicate that we do not understand them till we try to group floral decorations for ourselves. The

most successful artists will not, for instance, consent to put those together which do not grow together; for Nature understands her business, and distributes her masses and backgrounds unerringly. Yonder soft and feathery Meadow Sweet longs to be combined with Wild Roses; it yearns towards them in the field, and, after withering in the hand most readily, it revives in water as if to be with them in the vase. In the same way the White Spiræa serves as natural background for the Field Lilies. These lilies, by the way, are the brightest adornment of our meadows during the short period of their perfection. We have two species, — one slender, erect, solitary, scarlet, looking up to heaven with all its blushes on; the other clustered, drooping, pale yellow. I never saw the former in such profusion as on the bare summit of Wachusett. The granite ribs have there a thin covering of crisp moss, spangled with the white, starry blossoms of the Mountain Cinquefoil; and as I lay and watched the red lilies that waved their innumerable urns around me, it needed but little imagination to see a thousand altars, sending visible flames forever upward to the answering sun.

August comes: the Thistles are in bloom, beloved of butterflies; deeper and deeper tints, more passionate intensities of color, prepare the

way for the year's decline. A wealth of gorgeous Goldenrod waves over all the hills, and enriches every bouquet one gathers; its bright colors command the eye, and it is graceful as an elm. Fitly arranged, it gives a bright relief to the superb beauty of the Cardinal Flowers, the brilliant blue-purple of the Vervain, the pearl-white of the Life-Everlasting, the delicate lilac of the Monkey Flower, the soft pink and white of the Spiræas, — for the white yet lingers, — all surrounded by trailing wreaths of blossoming Clematis.

But the Cardinal Flower is best seen by itself, and, indeed, needs the surroundings of its native haunts to display its fullest beauty. Its favorite abode is along the dank, mossy stones of some black and winding brook, shaded with overarching bushes, and running one long stream of scarlet with these superb occupants. It seems amazing how anything so brilliant can mature in such a darkness. When a ray of sunlight strays in upon it, the bright creature seems to hover on the stalk ready to take flight, like some lost tropic bird. There is a spot whence I have in ten minutes brought away as many as I could hold in both arms, some bearing fifty blossoms on a single stalk; and I could not believe that there was such another mass of color in the world. Nothing cultivated

is comparable to them ; and, with all the talent lately lavished on wild-flower painting, I have never seen the peculiar sheen of these petals in the least degree delineated. It seems some new and separate tint, equally distinct from scarlet and from crimson, a splendor for which there is as yet no name, but only the reality.

It is the signal of autumn, when September exhibits the first Barrel Gentian by the roadside ; and there is a pretty insect in the meadows — the Mourning-cloak Moth, it might be called — which gives coincident warning. The innumerable Asters mark this period with their varied and widespread beauty ; the meadows are full of rose-colored Polygala, of the white spiral spikes of the Ladies' Tresses, and of the fringed loveliness of the Gentian. This flower, always unique and beautiful, opening its delicate eyelashes every morning to the sunlight, closing them again each night, has also a thoughtful charm about it as the last of the year's especial darlings. It lingers long, each remaining blossom growing larger and more deep in color, as with many other flowers ; and after it there is nothing for which to look forward, save the fantastic Witch-hazel.

On the water, meanwhile, the last White Lilies are sinking beneath the surface, and the last gay Pickerel-weed is gone, though the

rootless plants of the delicate Bladderwort, spreading over acres of shallows, still impurple the wide, smooth surface. Harriet Prescott Spofford says that some souls are like the Water-Lilies, fixed, yet floating. But others are like this graceful purple blossom, floating unfixed, kept in place only by its fellows around it, until perhaps a breeze comes, and, breaking the accidental cohesion, sweeps them all away.

The season reluctantly yields its reign, and over the quiet autumnal landscape everywhere, even after the glory of the trees is past, there are tints and fascinations of minor beauty. Last October, for instance, in walking, I found myself on a little knoll, looking northward. Overhead was a bower of climbing Waxwork, with its yellowish pods scarce disclosing their scarlet berries, — a wild Grapevine, with its fruit withered by the frost into still purple raisins, — and yellow Beech-leaves, detaching themselves with an effort audible to the ear. In the foreground were blue Raspberry-stems, yet bearing greenish leaves, — pale yellow Witch-hazel, almost leafless, — purple Viburnum-berries, — the silky cocoons of the Milkweed, — and, amid the underbrush, a few lingering Asters and Goldenrods, Ferns still green, and Maidenhair bleached white. In the background were hazy hills, white Birches bare

and snow-like, and a Maple half way up a sheltered hillside, one mass of canary-color, its fallen leaves making an apparent reflection on the earth at its foot, — and then a real reflection, fused into a glassy light intenser than itself, upon the smooth, dark stream below. The beautiful disrobing suggested the persistent and unconquerable delicacy of Nature, who shrinks from nakedness and is always seeking to veil her graceful boughs, — if not with leaves, then with feathery hoar-frost, ermined snow, or transparent icy armor.

After all, the fascination of summer lies not in any details, however perfect, but in the sense of total wealth that summer gives. Wholly to enjoy this, one must give one's self passively to it, and not expect to reproduce it in words. We strive to picture heaven, when we are barely at the threshold of the inconceivable beauty of earth. Perhaps the truant boy who simply bathes himself in the lake and then basks in the sunshine, dimly conscious of the exquisite loveliness around him, is wiser, because humbler, than is he who with presumptuous phrases tries to utter it. There are moments when the atmosphere is so surcharged with luxury that every pore of the body becomes an ample gate for sensation to flow in, and one has simply to sit still and be filled. In after years the memory

of books seems barren or vanishing, compared with the immortal bequest of hours like these. Other sources of illumination seem cisterns only; these are fountains. They may not increase the mere quantity of available thought, but they impart to it a quality which is priceless. No man can measure what a single hour with Nature may have contributed to the moulding of his mind. The influence is self-renewing, and if for a long time it baffles expression by reason of its fineness, so much the better in the end.

The soul is like a musical instrument: it is not enough that it be framed for the most delicate vibration, but it must vibrate long and often before the fibres grow mellow to the finest waves of sympathy. I perceive that in the veery's carolling, the clover's scent, the glistening of the water, the waving wings of butterflies, the sunset tints, the floating clouds, there are attainable infinitely more subtile modulations of thought than I can yet reach the sensibility to discriminate, much less describe. If in the simple process of writing one could physically impart to this page the fragrance of this spray of Azalea beside me, what a wonder would it seem! — and yet one ought to be able, by the mere use of language, to supply to every reader the total of that white, honeyed, trailing sweet-

ness, which summer insects haunt and the Spirit of the Universe loves. The defect is not in language, but in men. There is no conceivable beauty of blossom so beautiful as words, — none so graceful, none so perfumed. It is possible to dream of combinations of syllables so delicious that all the dawning and decay of summer cannot rival their perfection, nor winter's stainless white and azure match their purity and their charm. To write them, were it possible, would be to take rank with Nature; nor is there any other method, even by music, for human art to reach so high.

III

APRIL DAYS

"Can trouble dwell with April days?"
In Memoriam.

In our methodical American life, we still recognize some magic in summer. Most persons at least resign themselves to being decently happy in June. They accept June. They compliment its weather. They complain of the earlier months as cold, and so spend them in the city; and they complain of the later months as hot, and so refrigerate themselves on some barren seacoast. God offers us yearly a necklace of twelve pearls; most men choose the fairest, label it June, and cast the rest away. It is time to chant a hymn of more liberal gratitude.

There are no days in the whole round year more delicious than those which often come to us in the latter half of April. On these days one goes forth in the morning, and finds an Italian warmth brooding over all the hills, taking visible shape in a glistening mist of silvered azure, with which mingles the smoke from

many bonfires. The sun trembles in his own soft rays, till one understands the old English tradition, that he dances on Easter Day. Swimming in a sea of glory, the tops of the hills look nearer than their bases, and their glistening watercourses seem close to the eye, as is their liberated murmur to the ear. All across this broad intervale the teams are ploughing. The grass in the meadow seems all to have grown green since yesterday. The blackbirds jangle in the oak, the robin is perched upon the elm, the song sparrow on the hazel, and the bluebird on the apple-tree. There rises a hawk and sails slowly, the stateliest of airy things, a floating dream of long and languid summer hours. But as yet, though there is warmth enough for a sense of luxury, there is coolness enough for exertion. No tropics can offer such a burst of joy; indeed, no zone much warmer than our Northern States can offer a genuine spring. There can be none where there is no winter, and the monotone of the seasons is broken only by wearisome rains. Vegetation and birds being distributed over the year, there is no burst of verdure nor of song. But with us, as the buds are swelling, the birds are arriving; they are building their nests almost simultaneously; and in all the Southern year there is no such rapture of

beauty and of melody as here marks every morning from the last of April onward.

But days even earlier than these, in April, have a charm, — even days that seem raw and rainy, when the sky is dull and a bequest of March wind lingers, chasing the squirrel from the tree and the children from the meadows. There is a fascination in walking through these bare early woods, — there is such a pause of preparation, winter's work is so cleanly and thoroughly done. Everything is taken down and put away; throughout the leafy arcades the branches show no remnant of last year, save a few twisted leaves of oak and beech, a few empty seed vessels of the tardy witch-hazel, and a few gnawed nutshells dropped coquettishly by the squirrels into the crevices of the bark. All else is bare, but prophetic: buds everywhere, the whole splendor of the coming summer concentrated in those hard little knobs on every bough; and clinging here and there among them a brown, papery chrysalis, from which shall yet wave the superb wings of the Luna moth. An occasional shower patters on the dry leaves, but it does not silence the robin on the outskirts of the wood. Indeed, he sings louder than ever during rain, though the song sparrow and the bluebird are silent.

Then comes the sweetness of the nights in

latter April. There is as yet no evening primrose to open suddenly, no cistus to drop its petals; but the Mayflower knows the moment, and becomes more fragrant in the darkness, so that one can then often find it in the woods without aid from the eye. The pleasant night sounds are begun; the hylas are uttering their shrill *peep* from the meadows, mingled soon with hoarser toads, who take to the water at this season to deposit their spawn. The tree-toads soon join them; but one listens in vain for bull-frogs or katydids or grasshoppers or whip-poor-wills or crickets: we must wait for most of these until the nights of June.

The earliest familiar token of the coming season is the expansion of the stiff catkins of the alder into soft, drooping tresses. These are so sensitive that, if you pluck them at almost any time during the winter, a few days' sunshine will make them open in a vase of water, and thus they eagerly yield to every moment of April warmth. The blossom of the birch is more delicate, that of the willow more showy, but the alders come first. They cluster and dance everywhere upon the bare boughs above the watercourses; the blackness of the buds is softened into rich brown and yellow; and as this graceful creature thus comes waving into the spring, it is pleasant to remember

that the Norse Eddas fabled the first woman to have been named Embla, because she was created from an alder bough.

The first wild-flower of the year is like land after sea. The two which, throughout the Northern Atlantic States, divide this interest are the *Epigæa repens* (Mayflower, ground laurel, or trailing arbutus) and the *Hepatica triloba* (liverleaf, liverwort, or blue anemone). Of these two, the latter is perhaps more immediately exciting on first discovery, because it is an annual, not a perennial, and so does not, like the epigæa, exhibit its buds all winter, but opens its blue eyes almost as soon as it emerges from the ground. Without the rich and delicious odor of its compeer, it has an inexpressibly fresh and earthy scent, that seems to bring all the promise of the blessed season with it; indeed, that clod of fresh turf with the inhalation of which Lord Bacon delighted to begin the day must undoubtedly have been full of the roots of our little hepatica. Its healthy sweetness belongs to the opening year, like Chaucer's poetry; and one thinks that anything more potent and voluptuous would be less enchanting — until one turns to the Mayflower. Then comes a richer fascination for the senses. To pick the Mayflower is like following in the footsteps of some spendthrift

army which has scattered the contents of its treasure chest among beds of scented moss. The fingers sink in the soft, moist verdure, and make at each instant some superb discovery unawares; again and again, straying carelessly, they clutch some new treasure; and, indeed, the plants are linked together in bright necklaces by secret threads beneath the surface, and where you grasp at one, you hold many. The hands go wandering over the moss as over the keys of a piano, and bring forth odors for melodies. The lovely creatures twine and nestle and lay their glowing faces to the very earth beneath withered leaves, and what seemed mere barrenness becomes fresh and fragrant beauty. So great is the charm of the pursuit, that the epigæa is really the wild-flower for which our country people have a hearty passion. Every village child knows its best haunts, and watches for it eagerly in the spring; boys wreathe their hats with it, girls twine it in their hair, and the cottage windows are filled with its beauty.

In collecting these early flowers, one finds or fancies singular natural affinities. I flatter myself with being able always to discover hepatica, if there is any within reach, for I was brought up with it; but other persons, who were brought up with Mayflower, and remember searching for it with their childish fingers, can find that

better. The most remarkable instance of these natural affinities was in the case of Levi Thaxter and his double anemones. Thaxter had always a gift for wild-flowers, and used often to bring to Cambridge the largest white anemones that were ever seen, from a certain special hill in Watertown ; they were not only magnificent in size and whiteness, but had that exquisite blue on the outside of the petals, as if the sky had bent down in ecstasy at last over its darlings, and left visible kisses there. But even this success was not enough, and one day he came with something yet choicer. It was a rue-leaved anemone (*A. thalictroides*) ; and each one of the three white flowers was double, not merely with that multiplicity of petals in the disk which is common with this species, but technically and horticulturally double, like the double-flowering almond or cherry, — with the most exquisitely delicate little petals, like fairy lace-work. He had three specimens, and gave one to Professor Asa Gray of Harvard, who said it was almost or quite unexampled, and another to me. As the man in the fable says of the chameleon, " I have it yet and can produce it."

Now comes the marvel. The next winter Thaxter went to New York for a year, and wrote to me, as spring drew near, with solemn

charge to visit his favorite haunt and find another specimen. Armed with this letter of introduction, I sought the spot, and tramped through and through its leafy corridors. Beautiful wood-anemones I found, to be sure, trembling on their fragile stems, deserving all their pretty names, — Wind-flower, Easter-flower, Pasque-flower, and homœopathic Pulsatilla; — rue-leaved anemones I found also, rising taller and straighter and firmer in stem, with the whorl of leaves a little higher up on the stalk than one fancies it ought to be, as if there were a supposed danger that the flowers would lose their balance, and as if the leaves must be all ready to catch them. These I found, but the special wonder was not there for me. Then I wrote to him that he must evidently come himself and search; or that, perhaps, as Sir Thomas Browne avers that "smoke doth follow the fairest," so his little treasures had followed him towards New York. Judge of my surprise, when, on opening his next letter, out dropped, from those folds of metropolitan paper, a veritable double anemone. He had just been out to Hoboken, or some such place, to spend an afternoon, and of course his pets were there to meet him; and from that day to this I have never heard of such an event as happening to any one else.

May Day is never allowed to pass in this community without profuse lamentations over the tardiness of our spring as compared with that of England and the poets. Yet it is easy to exaggerate this difference. Even so good an observer as Wilson Flagg is betrayed into saying that the epigæa and hepatica "seldom make their appearance until after the middle of April" in Massachusetts, and that "it is not unusual for the whole month of April to pass away without producing more than two or three species of wild-flowers." But I have formerly found the hepatica in bloom at Mount Auburn, for three successive years, on the 27th of March; and it has since been found in Worcester on the 17th, and in Danvers on the 12th. The May-flower is usually as early, though the more gradual expansion of the buds renders it less easy to give dates. And there are nearly twenty species which I have noted, for five or six years together, as found always before May Day, and therefore properly to be assigned to April. The list includes bloodroot, cowslip, houstonia, saxifrage, dandelion, chickweed, cinquefoil, strawberry, mouse-ear, bellwort, dogtooth violet, five species of violet proper, and two of anemone. These are all common flowers, and easily observed; but the catalogue might be increased by rare ones, as the white corydalis, the smaller

yellow violet (*V. rotundifolia*), and the claytonia or spring beauty.

But in England the crocus and the snowdrop — neither being probably an indigenous flower, since neither is mentioned by Chaucer — usually open before the 1st of March; indeed, the snowdrop was formerly known by the yet more fanciful name of "Fair Maid of February." Chaucer's daisy comes equally early; and March brings daffodils, narcissi, violets, daisies, jonquils, hyacinths, and marsh marigolds. This is altogether in advance of our season, so far as the wild-flowers give evidence, — though snowdrops are sometimes found in February even here. But, on the other hand, it would appear that, though a larger number of birds winter in England than in Massachusetts, yet the return of those which migrate is actually earlier among us. From journals which were kept during sixty years in England, and an abstract of which is printed in Hone's "Every-Day Book," it appears that only two birds of passage revisit England before the 15th of April, and only thirteen more before the 1st of May; while with us the song sparrow, the bluebird, and the red-winged blackbird appear about the 1st of March, and a good many more by the middle of April. This is a peculiarity of the English spring which I have never seen explained or even mentioned.

After the epigæa and the hepatica have blossomed, there is a slight pause among the wild-flowers, — these two forming a distinct prologue for their annual drama, as the brilliant witch-hazel in October brings up its separate epilogue. The truth is, Nature attitudinizes a little, liking to make a neat finish with everything, and then to begin again with *éclat*. Flowers seem spontaneous things enough, but there is evidently a secret marshalling among them, that all may be brought out with due effect. As the country people say that so long as any snow is left on the ground more snow may be expected, for it must all vanish together at last, — so every seeker of spring flowers has observed how accurately they seem to move in platoons, with little straggling. Each species seems to burst upon us with a united impulse ; you may search for it day after day in vain, but the day when you find one specimen the spell is broken and you find twenty. By the end of April all the margins of the great poem of the woods are illuminated with these exquisite vignettes.

Most of the early flowers either come before the full unfolding of their leaves, or else have inconspicuous ones. Yet Nature always provides for her garlands the due proportion of green. The verdant and graceful sprays of the wild raspberry are unfolded very early, long before

its time of flowering. Over the meadows spread the regular Chinese pagodas of the equisetum (horse-tail or scouring-rush), and the rich, coarse vegetation of the veratrum, or American hellebore. In moist copses the ferns and osmundas begin to uncurl in April, opening their soft coils of spongy verdure, coated with woolly down, from which the hummingbird steals the lining of her nest.

The early blossoms represent the aboriginal epoch of our history: the bloodroot and the Mayflower are older than the white man, older perchance than the red man; they alone are the true Native Americans. Of the later wild plants, many of the most common are foreign importations. In our sycophancy we attach grandeur to the name "exotic;" we call aristocratic garden flowers by that epithet; yet they are no more exotic than the humbler companions they brought with them, which have become naturalized. The dandelion, the buttercup, chickweed, celandine, mullein, burdock, yarrow, whiteweed, nightshade, and most of the thistles, — these are importations. Miles Standish never crushed them with his heavy heel as he strode forth to give battle to the savages; they never kissed the daintier foot of Priscilla, the Puritan maiden. It is noticeable that these are all of rather coarser texture than

our indigenous flowers; the children instinctively recognize this, and are apt to omit them when gathering the more delicate native blossoms of the woods.

There is something touching in the gradual retirement before civilization of these fragile aborigines. They do not wait for the actual brute contact of red bricks and curbstones, but they feel the danger miles away. The Indians called the low plantain "the white man's footstep;" and these shy creatures gradually disappear the moment the red man gets beyond hearing. Bigelow's delightful book, "Florula Bostoniensis," is becoming a series of epitaphs. Too well we know it, — those of us who in happy Cambridge childhood often gathered, almost within a stone's-throw of Professor Agassiz's museum, the arethusa and the gentian, the cardinal flower and the gaudy rhexia, — we who remember the last secret hiding-place of the rhodora in West Cambridge, of the yellow violet and the *Viola debilis* in Watertown, of the *Convallaria trifolia* near Fresh Pond, of the *Hottonia* beyond Wellington's Hill, of the *Cornus florida* in West Roxbury, of the *Clintonia* and the dwarf ginseng in Brookline, — we who have found in its one chosen nook the sacred *Andromeda polifolia* of Linnæus. Now vanished almost or wholly from city suburbs, these

fragile creatures still linger in more rural parts of Massachusetts; but they are doomed everywhere, unconsciously, yet irresistibly; while others still more shy, as the *Linnæa*, the yellow *Cypripedium*, the early pink *Azalea*, and the delicate white *Corydalis* or "Dutchman's breeches," are being chased into the very recesses of the Green and White Mountains. The relics of the Indian tribes are supported by the legislature at Martha's Vineyard, while these precursors of the Indian are dying unfriended away.

And with these receding plants go also the special insects which haunt them. Who that knew the pure enthusiast, Dr. Thaddeus William Harris, but remembers the accustomed lamentations of the entomologist over the departure of these winged companions of his lifetime? In a letter which I happened to receive from him a short time previous to his death, he thus renewed the lament: "I mourn for the loss of many of the beautiful plants and insects that were once found in this vicinity. *Clethra, Rhodora, Sanguinaria, Viola debilis, Viola acuta, Dracæna borealis, Rhexia, Cypripedium, Corallorhiza verna, Orchis spectabilis*, with others of less note, have been rooted out by the so-called hand of improvement. *Cicindela rugifrons, Helluo præusta, Sphæroderus steno-*

stomus, *Blethisa quadricollis* (*Americana mi*), *Carabus*, *Horia* (which for several years occurred in profusion on the sands beyond Mount Auburn), with others, have entirely disappeared from their former haunts, driven away, or exterminated, perhaps, by the changes effected therein. There may still remain in your vicinity some sequestered spots, congenial to these and other rarities, which may reward the botanist and the entomologist who will search them carefully. Perhaps you may find there the pretty coccinella-shaped, silver-margined *Omophron*, or the still rarer *Panagœus fasciatus*, of which I once took two specimens on Wellington's Hill, but have not seen it since." Is not this, indeed, handling one's specimens "gently as if you loved them," as Isaak Walton bids the angler do with his worm?

There is this merit, at least, among the coarser crew of imported flowers, that they bring their own proper names with them, and we know precisely with whom we have to deal. In speaking of our own native flowers we must either be careless and inaccurate, or else resort sometimes to the Latin, in spite of the indignation of friends. There is something yet to be said on this point. In England, where the old household and monkish names adhere, they are sufficient for popular and poetic purposes, and

the familiar use of scientific names seems an affectation. But here, where many native flowers have no popular names at all, and others are called confessedly by wrong ones, — where it really costs less trouble to use Latin names than English, — the affectation seems the other way. Think of the long list of wild-flowers where the Latin name is spontaneously used by all who speak of the flower: as, Arethusa, Aster, Cistus ("after the fall of the cistus-flower"), Clematis, Clethra, Geranium, Iris, Lobelia, Rhodora, Spiræa, Tiarella, Trientalis, and so on. Even those formed from proper names — the worst possible system of nomenclature — become tolerable at last, and we forget the godfather in the more attractive namesake. When the person concerned happens to be a botanist, there is a peculiar fitness in the association; the Linnæa, at least, would not smell so sweet by any other name.

In other cases the English name is a mere modification of the Latin one, and our ideal associations have really a scientific basis: as with Violet, Lily, Laurel, Gentian, Vervain. Indeed, our enthusiasm for vernacular names is, like that for Indian names of localities, one sided: we enumerate only the graceful ones, and ignore the rest. It would be a pity to Latinize Touch-me-not, or Yarrow, or Gold

thread, or Self-heal, or Columbine, or Blue-eyed Grass, — though, to be sure, this last has an annoying way of shutting up its azure orbs the moment you gather it, and you reach home with a bare, stiff blade, which deserves no better name than *Sisyrinchium anceps*. But in what respect is Cucumber-root preferable to Medeola, or Solomon's Seal to Convallaria, or Rock Tripe to Umbilicaria, or Lousewort to Pedicularis? In other cases the merit is divided: Anemone may dispute the prize of melody with Wind-flower, Campanula with Harebell, Neottia with Ladies' Tresses, Uvularia with Bellwort and Strawbell, Potentilla with Cinquefoil, and Sanguinaria with Bloodroot. Hepatica may be bad, but Liverleaf is worse. The pretty name of Mayflower is not so popular, after all, as that of Trailing Arbutus, where the graceful and appropriate adjective redeems the substantive, which happens to be Latin and incorrect at once. It does seem a waste of time to say *Chrysanthemum leucanthemum* instead of Whiteweed; though, if the long scientific name were an incantation to banish the intruder, our farmers would gladly consent to adopt it.

But a great advantage of a reasonable use of the botanical name is that it does not deceive us. Our primrose is not the English

primrose, any more than it was our robin who tucked up the babes in the wood; our cowslip is not the English cowslip, it is the English marsh marigold, — Tennyson's marsh marigold. The pretty name of Azalea means something definite; but its rural name of Honeysuckle confounds under that name flowers without even an external resemblance, — Azalea, Diervilla, Lonicera, Aquilegia, — just as every bird which sings loud in deep woods is popularly denominated a thrush. The really rustic names of both plants and animals are very few with us, — the different species are many; and as we come to know them better and love them more, we absolutely require some way to distinguish them from their half sisters and second cousins. It is hopeless to try to create new popular epithets, or even to revive those which are thoroughly obsolete. Miss Cooper may strive in vain, with benevolent intent, to christen her favorite spring blossoms "May-Wings" and "Gay-Wings" and "Fringe-Cup" and "Squirrel-Cup" and "Cool-Wort" and "Bead-Ruby;" there is no conceivable reason why these should not be the familiar appellations, except the irresistible fact that they are not. It is impossible to create a popular name: one might as well attempt to invent a legend or compose a ballad. *Nascitur, non fit.*

As the spring comes on, and the changing outlines of the elm give daily a new design for a Grecian urn, — its hue first brown with blossoms, then emerald with leaves, — we appreciate the vanishing beauty of the bare boughs. In our favored temperate zone the trees denude themselves each year, like the goddesses before Paris, that we may see which unadorned loveliness is the fairest. Only the unconquerable delicacy of the beech still keeps its soft vestments about it: far into spring, when worn to thin rags and tatters, they cling there still; and when they fall, the new appear as by magic. It must be owned, however, that the beech has good reasons for this prudishness, and has hereabouts little beauty of figure; while the elms, maples, chestnuts, walnuts, and even oaks have not exhausted all their store of charms for us until we have seen them disrobed. Only yonder magnificent pine-tree, — that pitch pine, nobler when seen in perfection than white pine, or Norwegian, or Norfolk Islander, — that pitch pine, herself a grove, *una nemus*, holds her unchanging beauty throughout the year, like her half brother, the ocean, whose voice she shares; and only marks the flowing of her annual tide of life by the new verdure that yearly submerges all trace of last year's ebb.

How many lessons of faith and beauty we

should lose if there were no winter in our year! Sometimes in following up a watercourse among our hills, in the early spring, one comes to a weird and desolate place, where one huge wild grapevine has wreathed its ragged arms around a whole thicket and brought it to the ground, — swarming to the tops of hemlocks, clinching a dozen young maples at once and tugging them downward, stretching its wizard black length across the underbrush, into the earth and out again, wrenching up great stones in its blind, aimless struggle. What a piece of chaos is this! Yet come here again, two months hence, and you shall find all this desolation clothed with beauty and with fragrance, one vast bower of soft green leaves and graceful tendrils, while summer birds chirp and flutter amid these sunny arches all the livelong day.

To the end of April, and often later, one still finds remains of snow-banks in sheltered woods, especially among evergreens; and this snow, like that upon high mountains, has often become hardened, by the repeated thawing and freezing of the surface, till it is more impenetrable than ice. But the snow that falls during April is usually what Vermonters call "sugar-snow," — falling in the night and just whitening the surface for an hour or two, and taking

its name, not so much from its looks as from the fact that it denotes the proper weather for "sugaring," namely, cold nights and warm days. Our saccharine associations, however, remain so obstinately tropical that it seems almost impossible for the imagination to locate sugar in New England trees, though it is known that not the maple only, but the birch and the walnut even afford it in appreciable quantities.

Along our maritime rivers the people associate April, not with "sugaring," but with "shadding." The pretty *Amelanchier Canadensis* of Gray — the *Aronia* of Whittier's song — is called Shad-bush, or Shad-blow, in Essex County, from its connection with this season; and there is a bird known as the Shad-spirit, which I take to be identical with the flicker or golden-winged woodpecker, whose note is still held to indicate the first day when the fish ascend the river. Upon such slender wings flits our New England romance!

In April the creative process described by Thales is repeated, and the world is renewed by water. The submerged creatures first feel the touch of spring, and many an equivocal career, beginning in the ponds and brooks, learns later to ignore this obscure beginning, and hops or flutters in the dusty daylight. Early in March, before the first male canker-moth appears on

the elm-tree, the whirlwig beetles have begun to play round the broken edges of the ice, and the caddis-worms to crawl beneath it; and soon come the water-skater (*Gerris*) and the water-boatman (*Notonecta*). Turtles and newts are in busy motion when the spring birds are only just arriving. Those gelatinous masses in yonder wayside pond are the spawn of water-newts or tritons: in the clear, transparent jelly are imbedded, at regular intervals, little blackish dots; these elongate rapidly, and show symptoms of head and tail curled up in a spherical cell; the jelly is gradually absorbed for their nourishment, until on some fine morning, each elongated dot gives one vigorous wriggle, and claims thenceforward all the privileges of freedom. The final privilege is often that of being suddenly snapped up by a turtle or a snake: for Nature brings forth her creatures liberally, especially the aquatic ones, sacrifices nine tenths of them as food for their larger cousins, and reserves only a handful to propagate their race, on the same profuse scale, next season.

It is surprising, in the midst of our museums and scientific schools, how little we yet know of the common things around us. Our *savans* still confess their inability to discriminate with certainty the egg or tadpole of a frog from that of a toad; and it is strange that these hop-

ping creatures, which seem so unlike, should coincide so nearly in their juvenile career, while the tritons and salamanders, which border so closely on each other in their maturer state as sometimes to be hardly distinguishable, yet choose different methods and different elements for laying their eggs. The eggs of our salamanders, or land lizards, are deposited beneath the moss on some damp rock, without any gelatinous envelope; they are but few in number, and the anxious mamma may sometimes be found coiled in a circle around them, like the symbolic serpent of eternity.

The small number of birds yet present in early April gives a better opportunity for careful study, — more especially if one goes armed with that best of fowling-pieces, a small spy-glass: the best, — since how valueless for purposes of observation is the bleeding, gasping, dying body, compared with the fresh and living creature, as it tilts, trembles, and warbles on the bough before you! Observe that robin in the oak-tree's top: as he sits and sings, every one of the dozen different notes which he flings down to you is accompanied by a separate flirt and flutter of his whole body, and, as Thoreau says of the squirrel, "each movement seems to imply a spectator." Study that song sparrow: why is it that he always goes so ragged in

spring and the bluebird so neat? Is it that the song sparrow is a wild artist, absorbed in the composition of his lay, and oblivious of ordinary proprieties, while the smooth bluebird and his ash-colored mate cultivate their delicate warble only as a domestic accomplishment, and are always nicely dressed before sitting down at the piano? Then how exciting is the gradual arrival of the birds in their summer plumage! To watch it is like sitting at the window on Easter Sunday to observe the new bonnets. Yonder, in that clump of alders by the brook, is the delicious jargoning of the first flock of yellow-birds; there are the little gentlemen in black and yellow, and the little ladies in olive-brown; "sweet, sweet, sweet," is the only word they say, and often they will so lower their ceaseless warble that, though almost within reach, the minstrels seem far distant. There is the very earliest catbird, mimicking the bobolink before the bobolink has come: what is the history of his song, then? Is it a reminiscence of last year, or has the little coquette been practising it all winter, in some gay Southern society, where catbirds and bobolinks grow intimate, just as Southern fashionables from different States may meet and sing duets at Saratoga? There sounds the sweet, low, long-continued trill of the little hairbird, or chipping sparrow,

a suggestion of insect sounds in sultry summer: by and by we shall sometimes hear that same delicate rhythm burst the silence of the June midnights, and then, ceasing, make stillness more still. Now watch that woodpecker, roving in ceaseless search, travelling over fifty trees in an hour, running from top to bottom of some small sycamore, pecking at every crevice, pausing to dot a dozen inexplicable holes in a row upon an apple-tree, but never once intermitting the low, querulous murmur of housekeeping anxiety. Sometimes she stops to hammer with all her little life at some tough piece of bark, strikes harder and harder blows, throws herself back at last, flapping her wings furiously as she brings down her whole strength again upon it; finally it yields, and grub after grub goes down her throat, till she whets her beak after the meal as a wild beast licks its claws, and is off on her pressing business once more.

It is no wonder that there is so little substantial enjoyment of nature in the community, when we feed children on grammars and dictionaries only, and take no pains to train them to see that which is before their eyes. The mass of the community have "summered and wintered" the universe pretty regularly, one would think, for a good many years; and yet nine persons out of ten in the town or

city, and two out of three even in the country, seriously suppose, for instance, that the buds upon trees are formed in the spring; they have had them within sight all winter, and never seen them. So people think, in good faith, that a plant grows at the base of the stem, instead of at the top: that is, if they see a young sapling in which there is a crotch at five feet from the ground, they expect to see it ten feet from the ground by and by, — confounding the growth of a tree with that of a man or animal. But perhaps the best of us could hardly bear the system of tests unconsciously laid down by a small child of my acquaintance. The boy's father, a college-bred man, had early chosen the better part, and employed his fine faculties in rearing laurels in his own beautiful nursery gardens, instead of in the more arid soil of court-rooms or state-houses. Of course the young human scion knew the flowers by name before he knew his letters, and used their symbols more readily; and after he got the command of both, he was one day asked by his younger brother what the word "idiot" meant, — for somebody in the parlor had been saying that somebody else was an idiot. "Don't you know?" quoth Ben, in his sweet voice: "an idiot is a person who does n't know an arbor-vitæ from a pine, — he does n't know anything."

When Ben grows up to maturity, bearing such terrible definitions in his unshrinking hands, which of us will be safe?

The softer aspects of Nature, especially, require time and culture before man can enjoy them. To rude races her processes bring only terror, which is very slowly outgrown. Humboldt has best exhibited the scantiness of finer natural perceptions in Greek and Roman literature, in spite of the grand oceanic rhythm of Homer and the delicate water-coloring of the Greek Anthology and of Horace. The Oriental and the Norse sacred books are full of fresh and beautiful allusions; but the Greek saw in nature only a framework for art, and the Roman only a camping-ground for men. Even Virgil describes the grotto of Æneas merely as a "black grove" with "horrid shade," — "*Horrenti atrum nemus imminet umbra.*" Wordsworth points out that, even in English literature, the "Windsor Forest" of Anne, Countess of Winchelsea, was the first poem which represented nature as a thing to be consciously enjoyed; and as she was almost the first English poetess, we might be tempted to think that we owe this appreciation, like some other good things, to the participation of woman in literature. But, on the other hand, it must be remembered that the voluminous Duchess of

Newcastle, in her "Ode on Melancholy," describes among the symbols of hopeless gloom "the still moonshine night" and "a mill where rushing waters run about," — the sweetest natural images. In our own country, the early explorers seemed to find only horror in its woods and waterfalls. Josselyn, in 1672, could only describe the summer splendor of the White Mountain region as "dauntingly terrible, being full of rocky hills, as thick as molehills in a meadow, and full of infinite thick woods." Father Hennepin spoke of Niagara, in the narrative still quoted in the guide-books, as a "frightful cataract;" and honest John Adams could find no better name than "horrid chasm" for the picturesque gulf at Egg Rock, where he first saw the sea-anemone.

But we are lingering too long, perhaps, with this sweet April of smiles and tears. It needs only to add, that all her traditions are beautiful. Ovid says well, that she was not named from *aperire*, to open, as some have thought, but from *Aphrodite*, goddess of beauty. April holds Easter-time, St. George's Day, and the Eve of St. Mark's. She has not, like her sister May in Germany, been transformed to a verb and made a synonym for joy, — "*Deine Seele maiet den trüben Herbst*," — but April was believed in early ages to have been the birth-time of the

world. According to the Venerable Bede, the point was first accurately determined at a council held at Jerusalem about A. D. 200, when, after much profound discussion, it was finally decided that the world's birthday occurred on Sunday, April 8, — that is, at the vernal equinox and the full moon. But April is certainly the birth-time of the season, at least, if not of the planet. Its festivals are older than Christianity, older than the memory of man. No sad associations cling to it, as to the month of June, in which month, says William of Malmesbury, kings are wont to go to war, — "*Quando solent reges ad arma procedere*," — but it contains the Holy Week, and it is the Holy Month. And in April Shakespeare was born, and in April he died.

IV

WATER-LILIES

THE inconstant April mornings drop showers or sunbeams over the glistening lake, while far beneath its surface a murky mass disengages itself from the muddy bottom and rises slowly through the waves. The tasselled alder branches droop above it; the last year's blackbird's nest swings over it in the grapevine; the newly opened Hepaticas and Epigæas on the neighboring bank peer down modestly to look for it; the water-skater (Gerris) passes on the surface near it, casting on the shallow bottom the odd shadow of his feet, like three pairs of boxing-gloves; the Notonecta, or water-boatman, rows round and round it, sometimes on his breast, sometimes on his back; queer caddis-worms trail their self-made homesteads of leaves or twigs beside it; the Dytiscus, dorbug of the water, blunders clumsily against it; the tadpole wriggles his stupid way to it, and rests upon it, meditating of future frogdom; the passing wild duck dives and nibbles at it; the mink and muskrat brush it with their soft fur;

the spotted turtle slides over it; the slow larvæ of gauzy dragon-flies cling sleepily to its sides and await their change: all these fair or uncouth creatures feel, through the dim waves, the blessed longing of spring; and yet not one of them dreams that within that murky mass there lies a treasure too white and beautiful to be yet intrusted to the waves, and that for many a day the bud must yearn toward the surface, before the time when, aspiring above it, as mortals to heaven, it shall meet the sunshine with the answering beauty of the Water-Lily.

Days and weeks have passed away; the wild duck has flown onward, to dive for his luncheon in some remoter lake; the tadpoles have made themselves legs, with which they have vanished; the caddis-worms have sealed themselves up in their cylinders, and emerged again as winged insects; the dragon-flies have crawled up the water-reeds, and, clinging with heads upturned, have undergone the change which symbolizes immortality; the world is transformed from spring to summer; the lily-buds are opened into glossy leaf and radiant flower, and we have come for the harvest.

We visitors lodged, last night, in the old English phrase, "at the sign of the Oak and Star." Wishing not, indeed, like the ancient magicians, to gather magic berry and bud

before sunrise, but at least to see these treasures of the lake in their morning hour, we camped overnight on a little island, which one tall tree almost covers with its branches, while a dense undergrowth of young chestnuts and birches fills all the intervening space, touching the water all around the circular, shelving shore. The day had been hot, but the night was cool, and we kindled a gypsy fire of twigs, less for warmth than for society. The first gleam made the dark, lonely islet into a cheering home, turned the protecting tree to a starlit roof, and the chestnut sprays to illuminated walls. To us, lying beneath their shelter, every fresh flickering of the fire kindled the leaves into brightness and banished into dark interstices the lake and sky; then the fire died into embers, the leaves faded into solid darkness in their turn, and water and heavens showed light and close and near, until fresh twigs caught fire and the blaze came up again. Rising to look forth at intervals, during the peaceful hours, — for it is the worst feature of a night outdoors, that sleeping seems such a waste of time, — we watched the hilly and wooded shores of the lake sink into gloom and glimmer into dawn again, amid the low plash of waters and the noises of the night.

Precisely at half past three a song sparrow

above our heads gave one liquid trill, so inexpressibly sudden and delicious that it seemed to set to music every atom of freshness and fragrance that nature held; then the spell was broken, and the whole shore and lake were vocal with song. Joining in this jubilee of morning, we were early in motion; bathing and breakfast, though they seemed indisputably in accordance with the instincts of the universe, yet did not detain us long, and we were promptly on our way to Lily Pond. Will the reader join us?

It is one of those summer days when a veil of mist gradually burns away before the intense sunshine, and the sultry morning only plays at coolness, and that with its earliest visitors alone. But we are before the sunlight, though not before the sunrise, and can watch the pretty game of alternating mist and shine. Stray gleams of glory lend their trailing magnificence to the tops of chestnut-trees, floating vapors raise the outlines of the hills and make mystery of the wooded islands, and as we glide through the placid water we can sing, with the Chorus in the "Ion" of Euripides, "O immense and brilliant air, resound with our cries of joy!"

Almost every town has its Lily Pond, dear to boys and maidens, and partially equalizing, by its annual delights, the presence or absence of

other geographical advantages. Ours is accessible from the larger lake only by taking the skiff over a narrow embankment, which protects our fairy-land by its presence, and eight distant factories by its dam. Once beyond it, we are in a realm of dark Lethean water, utterly unlike the sunny depths of the main lake. Hither the water-lilies have retreated, to a domain of their own. In the bosom of these shallow waves there stand hundreds of submerged and dismasted roots, still upright, spreading their vast, uncouth limbs like enormous spiders beneath the surface. They are remnants of border wars with the axe, vegetable Witheringtons, still fighting on their stumps, but gradually sinking into the soft ooze, and ready, perhaps, when a score of centuries has piled two more strata of similar remains in mud above them, to furnish foundations for a newer New Orleans; that city having been lately discovered to be thus supported.

The present decline in the manufacturing business is clear revenue to the water-lilies, and these ponds are higher than usual, because the idle mills do not draw them off. But we may notice, in observing the shores, that peculiar charm of water, that, whether its quantity be greater or less, its grace is the same; it makes its own boundary in lake or river, and where its

edge is, there seems the natural and permanent margin. And the same natural fitness, without reference to mere quantity, extends to its flowery children. Before us lie islands and continents of lilies, acres of charms, whole, vast, unbroken surfaces of stainless whiteness. And yet, as we approach them, every island cup that floats in lonely dignity, apart from the multitude, appears perfect in itself, couched in white expanded perfection, its reflection taking a faint glory of pink that is scarcely perceptible in the flower. As we glide gently among them, the air grows fragrant, and a stray breeze flaps the leaves, as if to welcome us. Each floating flower becomes suddenly a ship at anchor, or rather seems beating up against the summer wind in a regatta of blossoms.

Early as it is in the day, the greater part of the flowers are already expanded. Indeed, that experience of Thoreau's, of watching them open in the first sunbeams, rank by rank, is not easily obtained, unless perhaps in a narrow stream, where the beautiful slumberers are more regularly marshalled. In our lake, at least, they open irregularly, though rapidly. But this morning many linger as buds, while others peer up, in half-expanded beauty, beneath the lifted leaves, frolicsome as Pucks or baby nymphs. As you raise the leaf, in such

cases, it is impossible not to imagine that a pair of tiny hands have upheld it, and that the pretty head will dip down again and disappear. Others, again, have expanded all but the inmost pair of white petals, and these spring apart at the first touch of the finger on the stem. Some spread vast vases of fragrance, six or seven inches in diameter, while others are small and delicate, with petals like fine lacework. Smaller still, we sometimes pass a flotilla of infant leaves an inch in diameter. All these grow from the dark water, — and the blacker it is, the fairer their whiteness shows. But your eye follows the stem often vainly into those sombre depths, and vainly seeks to behold Sabrina fair, sitting with her twisted braids of lilies, beneath the glassy, cool, but not translucent wave. Do not start, when, in such an effort, only your own dreamy face looks back upon you beyond the gunwale of the reflected boat, and you find that you float double — self and shadow.

Let us rest our paddles, and look round us, while the idle motion sways our light skiff onward, now half embayed among the lily-pads, now lazily gliding over intervening gulfs. There is a great deal going on in these waters and their fringing woods and meadows. All the summer long the pond is bordered with successive walls of flowers. In early spring

emerge the yellow catkins of the swamp willow, first; then the long tassels of the graceful alders expand and droop, till they weep their yellow dust upon the water; then come the birch blossoms, more tardily; then the downy leaves and white clusters of the medlar or shad-bush (*Amelanchier Canadensis*); these dropping, the roseate chalices of the mountain laurel open; as they fade into melancholy brown, the sweet Azalea uncloses; and before its last honeyed blossom has trailed down, dying, from the stem, the more fragrant Clethra starts out above, the button-bush thrusts forth its merry face amid wild roses, and the Clematis waves its sprays of beauty. Mingled with these grow, lower, the spiræas, white and pink, yellow touch-me-not, fresh white arrowhead, bright blue vervain and skullcap, dull snakehead, gay monkey flower, coarse eupatoriums, milkweeds, goldenrods, asters, thistles, and a host beside. Beneath, the brilliant scarlet cardinal flower begins to palisade the moist shores; and after its superb reflection has passed away from the waters, the grotesque witch-hazel flares out its narrow yellow petals amidst the October leaves, and so ends the floral year. There is not a week during all these months when one cannot stand in the boat and wreathe garlands of blossoms from the shores.

These all crowd around the brink, and watch, day and night, the opening and closing of the water-lilies. Meanwhile, upon the waters, our queen keeps her chosen court, nor can one of these mere land-loving blossoms touch the hem of her garment. In truth, she bears no sister near her throne. There is but this one species among us, *Nymphæa odorata*, the beautiful little rose-colored *Nymphæa sanguinea*, which still adorns the Botanic Gardens, being merely an occasional variety. She has, indeed, an English half-sister, *Nymphæa alba*, less beautiful, less fragrant, but keeping more fashionable hours, — not opening (according to Linnæus) till seven, nor closing till four. And she has a humble cousin, the yellow Nuphar, who keeps commonly aloof, as becomes a poor relation, though created from the self-same mud, — a fact which Hawthorne has beautifully moralized. The prouder Nelumbium, a second cousin, lineal descendant of the sacred bean of Pythagoras, has fallen to an obscurer position, but dwells, like a sturdy democrat, in the Far West.

Yet, undisturbed, the water-lily reigns on, with her retinue around her. The tall pickerel-weed (Pontederia) is her gentleman usher, gorgeous in blue and gold through July, somewhat rusty in August. The water-shield (Hydropeltis) is chief maid-of-honor; a high-born

lady she, not without royal blood, indeed, but with rather a bend sinister; not precisely beautiful, but very fastidious; encased over her whole person with a gelatinous covering, literally a starched duenna. Sometimes she is suspected of conspiring to drive her mistress from the throne; for we have observed certain slow watercourses where the leaves of the water-lily have been almost wholly replaced, in a series of years, by the similar, but smaller leaves of the water-shield. More rarely seen is the slender Utricularia, a dainty maiden, whose light feet scarce touch the water, — with the still more delicate floating white Water-Ranunculus, and the shy Villarsia, whose submerged flowers merely peep one day above the surface and then close again forever. Then there are many humbler attendants, Potamogetons or pond-weeds. And here float little emissaries from the dominions of land; for the fallen florets of the Viburnum drift among the lily-pads, with mast-like stamens erect, sprinkling the water with a strange beauty, and cheating us with the promise of a new aquatic flower.

These are the still life of this sequestered nook; but it is in fact a crowded thoroughfare. No tropic jungle more swarms with busy existence than these midsummer waters and their bushy banks. The warm and humming air is

filled with insect sounds, ranging from the murmur of invisible gnats and midges to the impetuous whirring of the great Libellulæ, large almost as swallows, and hawking high in air for their food. Swift butterflies glance by, moths flutter, flies buzz, grasshoppers and katydids pipe their shrill notes, sharp as the edges of the sunbeams. Busy bees go humming past, straight as arrows, express freight trains from one blossoming copse to another. Showy wasps of many species fume uselessly about, in gallant uniforms, wasting an immense deal of unnecessary anger on the sultry universe. Graceful, stingless Sphexes and Ichneumon-flies emulate their bustle, without their weapons. Delicate lady-birds come and go to the milkweeds, spotted almost as regularly as if nature had decided to number the species, like policemen or hack-drivers, from one to twenty. Elegant little Lepturæ fly with them, so gay and airy they hardly seem like beetles. Phryganeæ (once caddis-worms), lace-flies, and long-tailed Ephemeræ flutter more heavily by. On the large alder flowers clings the suberb *Desmocerus palliatus*, beautiful as a tropical insect, with his steel-blue armor and his golden cloak (*pallium*) above his shoulders, grandest knight on this Field of the Cloth of Gold. The countless fireflies which spangled the evening mist now only

crawl sleepily, daylight creatures, with the lustre buried in their milky bodies. More wholly children of night, the soft, luxurious Sphinxes (or hawk-moths) come not here; fine ladies of the insect world, their home is among gardens and greenhouses, late and languid by day, but all night long upon the wing, dancing in the air with unwearied muscles till long past midnight, and supping on honey at last. They come not; but the nobler butterflies soar above us, stoop a moment to the water, and then with a few lazy wavings of their sumptuous wings float far over the oak-trees to the woods they love.

All these hover near the water-lily; but its special parasites are an enamelled beetle (*Donacia metallica*) which keeps house permanently in the flower, and a few smaller ones which tenant the surface of the leaves, — larva, pupa, and perfect insect, forty feeding like one, and each leading its whole earthly career on this floating island of perishable verdure. The "beautiful blue damsel-flies" alight also in multitudes among them, so fearless that they perch with equal readiness on our boat or paddle, and so various that two adjacent ponds will sometimes be haunted by two distinct sets of species. In the water, among the leaves, little shining whirlwigs wheel round and round, fifty joining

in the dance, till, at the slightest alarm, they whirl away to some safer ball-room, and renew the merriment. On every floating log as we approach it, there is a convention of turtles, sitting in calm debate, like mailed barons, till, as we draw near, they plump into the water, and paddle away for some subaqueous Runnymede. Beneath, the shy and stately pickerel vanishes at a glance, shoals of minnows glide, black and bearded pouts frisk aimlessly, soft water-newts hang poised without motion, and slender pickerel-frogs cease occasionally their submerged croaking, and, darting to the surface, with swift vertical strokes, gulp a mouthful of fresh air, and down again to renew the moist soliloquy.

Time would fail us to tell of the feathered life around us, — the blackbirds that build securely in these thickets, the stray swallows that dip their wings in the quiet waters, and the kingfishers that still bring, as the ancients fabled, halcyon days. Yonder stands, against the shore, a bittern, motionless in that wreath of mist which makes his long-legged person almost as dim as his far-off booming by night. There poises a hawk, before sweeping down to some chosen bough in the dense forest; and there flies a pair of blue jays, screaming, from tree to tree. As for wild quadrupeds, the race is almost passed away. Far to the north,

indeed, the great moose still browses on the lily-pads, and the shy beaver nibbles them; but here the few lingering four-footed creatures only haunt, but do not graze upon, these floating pastures. Eyes more favored than ours may yet chance to spy an otter in this still place; there by the shore are the small footprints of a mink; that dark thing disappearing in the waters yonder, a soft mass of drowned fur, is a muskrat, or "musquash." Later in the season a mound of earth will be his winter dwelling-place; and these myriad mussel-shells at the water's edge are the remnant of his banquets, — once banquets for the Indians, too.

But we must return to our lilies. There is no sense of wealth like floating in this archipelago of white and green. The emotions of avarice become almost demoralizing. Every flower bears a fragrant California in its bosom, and you feel impoverished at the thought of leaving one behind. Then, after the first half hour of eager grasping, one becomes fastidious, rather avoids those on which the wasps and flies have alighted, and seeks only the stainless. But handle them tenderly, as if you loved them. Do not grasp at the open flower as if it were a peony or a hollyhock, for then it will come off, stalkless, in your hand, and you will cast it blighted upon the water; but coil your thumb

and second finger affectionately around it, press the extended forefinger firmly to the stem below, and with one steady pull you will secure a long and delicate stalk, fit to twine around the graceful head of your beloved, as the Hindoo goddess of beauty encircled with a Lotus the brow of Rama.

Consider the lilies. All over our rural watercourses, at midsummer, float these cups of snow. They are nature's symbols of coolness. They suggest to us the white garments of their Oriental worshippers. They come with the white roses, and prepare the way for the white lilies of the garden. The white doe of Rylstone and Andrew Marvell's fawn might fitly bathe amid their beauties. Yonder steep bank slopes down to the lakeside, one solid mass of pale pink laurel, but, once upon the water, a purer tint prevails. The pink fades into a lingering flush, and the white creature floats peerless, set in green without and gold within. That bright circle of stamens is the very ring with which Doges once wedded the Adriatic; Venice has lost it, but it dropped into the water-lily's bosom, and there it rests forever. So perfect in form, so redundant in beauty, so delicate, so spotless, so fragrant, — what presumptous lover ever dared, in his most enamoured hour, to liken his mistress to a water-

lily? No human Blanche or Lilian was ever so fair as that.

The water-lily comes of an ancient and sacred family of white-robed priests. They assisted at the most momentous religious ceremonies, from the beginning of recorded time. The Egyptian Lotus was a sacred plant; it was dedicated to Harpocrates and to the God Nofr Atmoo, — *Nofr* meaning *good*, whence the name of our yellow lily, Nuphar. But the true Egyptian flower was *Nymphæa Lotus*, though *Nymphæa cærulea*, Moore's "blue water-lilies," can be traced on the sculptures also. It was cultivated in tanks in the gardens; it was the chief material for festal wreaths; a single bud hung over the forehead of many a queenly dame; and the sculptures represent the weary flowers as dropping from the heated hands of belles, in the later hours of the feast. Rock softly on the waters, fair lilies! your Eastern kindred have rocked on the stormier bosom of Cleopatra. The Egyptian Lotus was, moreover, the emblem of the sacred Nile, — as the Hindoo species of the sacred Ganges; and each was held the symbol of the creation of the world from the waters. The sacred bull Apis was wreathed with its garlands; there were niches for water, to place it among tombs; it was carved in the capitals of columns; it was

represented on plates and vases; the sculptures show it in many sacred uses, even as a burnt-offering; Isis holds it; and the god Nilus still binds a wreath of water-lilies around the throne of Memnon.

From Egypt the Lotus was carried to Assyria, and Layard found it among fir-cones and honeysuckles on the later sculptures of Nineveh. The Greeks dedicated it to the nymphs, whence the name *Nymphæa.* Nor did the Romans disregard it, though the Lotus to which Ovid's nymph Lotis was changed, *servato nomine*, was a tree, and not a flower. Still different a thing was the enchanted stem of the Lotus-eaters of Herodotus, which prosaic botanists have reduced to the *Zizyphus Lotus* found by Mungo Park, translating also the yellow Lotus-dust into a mere "farina, tasting like sweet gingerbread."

But in the Lotus of Hindostan we find our flower again, and the Oriental sacred books are cool with water-lilies. Open the Vishnù Purana at any page, and it is a *Sortes Lilianæ.* The orb of the earth is Lotus-shaped, and is upborne by the tusks of Vesava, as if he had been sporting in a lake where the leaves and blossoms float. Brahma, first incarnation of Vishnu, creator of the world, was born from a Lotus; so was Sri or Lakshmu, the Hindoo Venus, god-

dess of beauty and prosperity, protectress of womanhood, whose worship guards the house from all danger. "Seated on a full-blown Lotus, and holding a Lotus in her hand, the goddess Sri, radiant with beauty, rose from the waves." The Lotus is the chief ornament of the subterranean Eden, Patala, and the holy mountain Meru is thought to be shaped like its seed-vessel, larger at summit than at base. When the heavenly Urvasi fled from her earthly spouse, Purúvavas, he found her sporting with four nymphs of heaven, in a lake beautified with the Lotus. When the virtuous Prahlada was burned at the stake, he cried to his cruel father, "The fire burneth me not, and all around I behold the face of the sky, cool and fragrant with beds of Lotus-flowers!" Above all, the graceful history of the transformations of Krishna is everywhere hung with these fresh chaplets. Every successive maiden whom the deity wooes is Lotus-eyed, Lotus-mouthed, or Lotus-cheeked, and the youthful hero wears always a Lotus-wreath. Also "the clear sky was bright with the autumnal moon, and the air fragrant with the perfume of the wild water-lily, in whose buds the clustering bees were murmuring their song."

Elsewhere we find fuller details. "In the primordial state of the world, the rudimentary

universe, submerged in water, reposed on the bosom of the Eternal. Brahma, the architect of the world, poised on a Lotus-leaf, floated upon the waters, and all that he was able to discern with his eight eyes was water and darkness. Amid scenes so ungenial and dismal, the god sank into a profound reverie, when he thus soliloquized: 'Who am I? Whence am I?' In this state of abstraction Brahma continued during the period of a century and a half of the gods, without apparent benefit or a solution of his inquiries, — a circumstance which caused him great uneasiness of mind." It is a comfort, however, to know that subsequently a voice came to him, on which he rose, "seated himself upon the Lotus in an attitude of contemplation, and reflected upon the Eternal, who soon appeared to him in the form of a man with a thousand heads," — a questionable exchange for his Lotus-solitude.

This is Brahminism; but the other great form of Oriental religion has carried the same fair symbol with it. One of the Bibles of the Buddhists is named "The White Lotus of the Good Law." A pious Nepaulese bowed in reverence before a vase of lilies which perfumed the study of Sir William Jones. At sunset in Thibet, the French missionaries tell us, every inhabitant of every village prostrates himself in the

public square, and the holy invocation, "Oh, the gem in the Lotus!" goes murmuring over hill and valley, like the sound of many bees. It is no unmeaning phrase, but an utterance of ardent desire to be absorbed into that Brahma whose emblem is the sacred flower. This mystic formula or "mani" is imprinted on the pavement of the streets, it floats on flags from the temples, and the wealthy Buddhists maintain sculptor-missionaries, Old Mortalities of the water-lily, who, wandering to distant lands, carve the blessed words upon cliff and stone.

Having got thus far into Orientalism, we can hardly expect to get out again without some slight entanglement in philology. Lily-pads. Whence *pads?* No other leaf is identified with that singular monosyllable. Has our floating Lotus-leaf any connection with padding, or with a footpad? with the ambling pad of an abbot, or a paddle, or a paddock, or a padlock? with many-domed Padua proud, or with St. Patrick? Is the name derived from the Anglo-Saxon *paad* or *petthian*, or the Greek πατέω? The etymologists are silent; but was there ever a philological trouble for which the Sanscrit could not afford at least a conjectural cure? A dictionary of that venerable tongue is an ostrich's stomach, which can crack the hardest etymological nut. The Sanscrit name for the Lotus

is simply *Padma.* The learned Brahmins call the Egyptian deities Padma Devi, or Lotus-Gods; the second of the eighteen Hindoo Puranas is styled the Padma Purana, because it treats of the "epoch when the world was a golden Lotus;" and the sacred incantation which goes murmuring through Thibet is "Om mani padme houm." It would be singular, if upon these delicate floating leaves a fragment of our earliest vernacular has been borne down to us, so that here the schoolboy is more learned than the philologists.

This lets us down easily to the more familiar uses of this plant divine. By the Nile, in early days, the water-lily was good not merely for devotion, but for diet. "From the seeds of the Lotus," said Pliny, "the Egyptians make bread." The Hindoos still eat the seeds, roasted in sand; also the stalks and roots. In South America, from the seeds of the Victoria (*Nymphæa Victoria*, now *Victoria Regia*) a farina is made, preferred to that of the finest wheat, — Bonpland even suggesting to our reluctant imagination Victoria-pies. But the European species are used, so far as is reported, only in dyeing, and as food (if the truth be told) of swine. Our own water-lily is rather more powerful in its uses; the root contains tannin and gallic acid, and a decoction of it "gives a black

precipitate, with sulphate of iron." It graciously consents to become an astringent and a styptic, and a poultice, and, banished from all other temples, still lingers in those of Æsculapius.

The botanist also finds his special satisfactions in the flower. It has some strange peculiarities of structure. So loose is the internal distribution of its tissues, that it was for some time held doubtful to which of the two great vegetable divisions, exogenous or endogenous, it belonged. Its petals, moreover, furnish the best example of the gradual transition of petals into stamens, — illustrating that wonderful law of identity which is the great discovery of modern science. Every child knows this peculiarity of the water-lily, but the extent of it seems to vary with season and locality, and sometimes one finds a succession of flowers almost entirely free from this confusion of organs.

The reader may not care to learn that the order of Nymphæaceæ "differs from Ranunculaceæ in the consolidation of its carpels, from Papaveraceæ in the placentation not being parietal, and from Nelumbiaceæ in the want of a large truncated disc containing monospermous achenia;" but they may like to know that the water-lily has relations on land, in all gradations of society, from poppy to magnolia, and yet

does not conform its habits precisely to those of any of them. Its great black roots, sometimes as large as a man's arm, form a network at the bottom of the water. Its stem floats, an airy four-celled tube, adapting itself to the depth, and stiff in shallows, like the stalk of the yellow lily; and it contracts and curves downward when seedtime approaches. The leaves show beneath the magnifier beautiful adaptations of structure. They are not, like those of land plants, constructed with deep veins to receive the rain and conduct it to the stem, but are smooth and glossy, and of even surface. The leaves of land vegetation have also thousands of little breathing-pores, principally on the under side: the apple leaf, for instance, has twenty-four thousand to the square inch. But here they are fewer; they are wholly on the upper side, and, whereas in other cases they open or shut according to the moisture of the atmosphere, here the greedy leaves, secure of moisture, scarcely deign to close them. Nevertheless, even these give some recognition of hygrometric necessities, and, though living on the water, and not merely christened with dewdrops like other leaves, but baptized by immersion all the time, they are yet known to suffer in drought and to take pleasure in the rain.

After speaking of the various kindred of the

water-lily, it would be wrong to leave our modest species without due mention of its rarest and most magnificent relative, at first claimed even as its twin sister, and classed as a Nymphæa. I once lived near neighbor to a Victoria Regia. Nothing in the world of vegetable existence has such a human interest. The charm is not in the mere size of the plant, which disappoints everybody, as Niagara does, when tried by that sole standard. The leaves of the Victoria, indeed, attain a diameter of six feet; the largest flowers, of twenty-three inches, — four times the size of the largest of our water-lilies. But it is not the measurements of the Victoria, it is its life which fascinates. It is not a thing merely of dimensions, nor merely of beauty, but a creature of vitality and motion. Those vast leaves expand and change almost visibly. They have been known to grow half an inch an hour, eight inches a day. Rising one day from the water, a mere clinched mass of yellow prickles, a leaf is transformed the next day to a crimson salver, gorgeously tinted on its upturned rim. Then it spreads into a raft of green, armed with long thorns, and supported by a framework of ribs and crosspieces, an inch thick, and so substantial that the Brazil Indians, while gathering the seed-vessels, place their young children on the leaves; — *yrupe*,

or water-platter, they call the accommodating plant. But even these expanding leaves are not the glory of the Victoria; the glory is in the opening of the flower.

I have sometimes looked in, for a passing moment, at the greenhouse, its dwelling-place, during the period of flowering, — and then stayed for more than an hour, unable to leave the fascinating scene. After the strange flower-bud has reared its dark head from the placid tank, moving a little, uneasily, like some imprisoned water-creature, it pauses for a moment in a sort of dumb despair. Then, trembling again, and collecting all its powers, it thrusts open, with an indignant jerk, the rough calyx-leaves; and the beautiful disrobing begins. The firm, white, central cone, once so closely infolded, quivers a little, and swiftly, before your eyes, the first of the hundred petals detaches its delicate edges, and springs back, opening towards the water, while its white reflection opens to meet it from below. Many moments of repose follow, — you watch, — another petal trembles, detaches, springs open, and is still. Then another, and another, and another. Each movement is so quiet, yet so emphatic, so living, so human, that the radiant creature seems a Musidora of the water, and you almost blush with a sense of guilt, in gazing on that peerless pri-

vacy. As petal by petal slowly opens, there still stands the central cone of snow, a glacier, an alp, a Jungfrau, while each avalanche of whiteness seems the last. Meanwhile a strange, rich odor fills the air, and Nature seems to concentrate all fascinations and claim all senses for this jubilee of her darling.

So pass the enchanted moments of the evening, till the fair thing pauses at last, and remains for hours unchanged. In the morning, one by one, those white petals close again, shutting all their beauty in, and you watch through the short sleep for the period of waking. Can this bright, transfigured creature appear again in the same chaste loveliness? Your fancy can scarcely trust it, fearing some disastrous change; and your fancy is too true a prophet. Come again, after the second day's opening, and you start at the transformation which one hour has secretly produced. Can this be the virgin Victoria, — this thing of crimson passion, this pile of pink and yellow, relaxed, expanding, voluptuous, lolling languidly upon the water, never to rise again? In this short time every tint of every petal is transformed; it is gorgeous in beauty, but it is "Hebe turned to Magdalen."

Such is the Victoria Regia. But our rustic water-lily, our innocent Nymphæa, never claim-

ing such a hothouse glory, never drooping into such a blush, blooms on placidly in the quiet waters, till she modestly folds her leaves for the last time, and bows her head beneath the surface forever. Next year she lives for us only in her children, fair and pure as herself.

Nay, not alone in them, but also in memory. The fair vision will not fade from us, though the paddle has dipped its last crystal drop from the waves, and the boat is drawn upon the shore. We may yet visit many lovely and lonely places, — meadows thick with violet, or the homes of the shy Rhodora, or those sloping forest haunts where the slight Linnæa hangs its twin-born heads, — but no scene will linger on our vision like this annual Feast of the Lilies. On scorching mountains, amid raw prairie winds, or upon the regal ocean, the white pageant shall come back to memory again, with all the luxury of summer heats, and all the fragrant coolness that can relieve them. We shall fancy ourselves again among these fleets of anchored lilies, — again, like Urvasi, sporting amid the Lake of Lotuses.

For that which is remembered is often more vivid than that which is seen. The eye paints better in the presence, the heart in the absence, of the object most dear. "He who longs after beautiful Nature can best describe her," said

Bettine Brentano; "he who is in the midst of her loveliness can only lie down and enjoy." It enhances the truth of the poet's verses, that he writes them in his study. Absence is the very air of passion, and all the best description is *in memoriam.* As with our human beloved, when the graceful presence is with us, we cannot analyze or describe, but merely possess, and only after its departure can it be portrayed by our yearning desires; so is it with Nature: only in losing her do we gain the power to describe her, and we are introduced to Art, as we are to Eternity, by the dropping away of our companions.

V

A SUMMER AFTERNOON

THE noontide of the summer day is past, when all nature slumbers, and when the ancients feared to sing, lest the great god Pan should be awakened. Soft changes, the gradual shifting of every shadow on every leaf, begin to show the waning hours. Ineffectual thunderstorms have gathered and gone by, hopelessly defeated. The floating bridge is trembling and resounding beneath the pressure of one heavy wagon, and the quiet fishermen change their places to avoid the tiny ripple that glides stealthily to their feet above the half-submerged planks. Down the glimmering lake there are miles of silence and still waters and green shores, overhung with a multitudinous and scattered fleet of purple and golden clouds, now furling their idle sails and drifting away into the vast harbor of the South. Voices of birds, hushed first by noon and then by possibilities of tempest, cautiously begin once more, leading on the infinite melodies of the June afternoon. As the freshened air invites them

forth, so the smooth and stainless water summons us. "Put your hand upon the oar," says Charon, in the old play, to Bacchus, "and you shall hear the sweetest songs." The doors of the boathouse swing softly open, and the slender wherry, like a water-snake, steals silently in the wake of the dispersing clouds.

The woods are hazy, as if the warm sunbeams had melted in among the interstices of the foliage and spread a soft film throughout the whole. The sky seems to reflect the water, and the water the sky; both are roseate with color, both are darkened with clouds, and between them both, as the boat recedes, the floating bridge hangs suspended, with its motionless fishermen and its moving team. The wooded islands are poised upon the lake, each belted with a paler tint of softer wave. The air seems fine and palpitating; the drop of an oar in a distant rowlock, the sound of a hammer on a dismantled boat, pass into some region of mist and shadows, and form a metronome for delicious dreams.

Every summer I launch my boat to seek some realm of enchantment beyond all the sordidness and sorrow of earth, and never yet did I fail to ripple, with my prow at least, the outskirts of those magic waters. What spell has fame or wealth to enrich this midday bless-

edness with a joy the more? Yonder barefoot boy, as he drifts silently in his punt beneath the drooping branches of that vine-clad bank, has a bliss which no millionaire can buy with money, no statesman conquer with votes, — which yet is no monopoly of his, and to which time and experience only add a more subtile and conscious charm. The rich years were given us to increase, not to impair, these cheap felicities. Sad or sinful is the life of that man who finds not the heavens bluer and the waves more musical in maturity than childhood. Time is a severe alembic of youthful joys, no doubt; we exhaust book after book, and leave Shakespeare unopened; we grow fastidious in men and women; all the rhetoric, all the logic, we fancy we have heard before; we have seen the pictures, we have listened to the symphonies: but what has been done by all the art and literature of the world towards describing one summer day? The most exhausting effort brings us no nearer to it than to the blue sky which is its dome; our words are shot up against it like arrows, and fall back helpless. Literary amateurs go the tour of the globe to renew their stock of materials, when they do not yet know a bird or a bee or a blossom beside their homestead door; and in the hour of their greatest success they have not an horizon to their

life so large as that of yonder boy in his punt. All that is purchasable in the capitals of the world is not to be weighed in comparison with the simple enjoyment that may be crowded into one hour of sunshine. What can place or power do here? "Who could be before me, though the palace of Cæsar cracked and split with emperors, while I, sitting in silence on a cliff of Rhodes, watched the sun as he swung his golden censer athwart the heavens?"

It is pleasant to observe a sort of confused and latent recognition of all this in the instinctive sympathy which is always rendered to any indication of outdoor pursuits. How cordially one sees the eyes of all travellers turn to the man who enters the railroad station with a fowling-piece in hand, or the boy with water-lilies! There is a momentary sensation of the freedom of the woods, a whiff of oxygen for the anxious money-changers. How agreeably sounds the news — to all but his creditors — that the lawyer or the merchant has locked his office door and gone fishing! The American temperament needs at this moment nothing so much as that wholesome training of semi-rural life which reared Hampden and Cromwell to assume at one grasp the sovereignty of England, and which has ever since served as the foundation of England's greatest ability. The

best thoughts and purposes seem ordained to come to human beings beneath the open sky, as the ancients fabled that Pan found, when he was engaged in the chase, the goddess Ceres, whom no other of the gods could find when seeking seriously. The little I have gained from colleges and libraries has certainly not worn so well as the little I learned in childhood of the habits of plant, bird, and insect. That "weight and sanity of thought," which Coleridge so finely makes the crowning attribute of Wordsworth, is in no way so well matured and cultivated as in the society of nature.

There may be extremes and affectations, and Mary Lamb declared that Wordsworth held it doubtful if a dweller in towns had a soul to be saved. During the various phases of transcendental idealism among ourselves in the last fifty years, the love of nature has at times assumed an exaggerated and even a pathetic aspect, in the morbid attempts of youths and maidens to make it a substitute for vigorous thought and action, — a lion endeavoring to dine on grass and green leaves. In some cases this mental chlorosis reached such a height as almost to nauseate one with nature, when in the society of the victims; and surfeited companions felt inclined to rush to the treadmill immediately, or get chosen on the Board of

Selectmen, or plunge into any conceivable drudgery, in order to feel that there was still work enough in the universe to keep it sound and healthy. But this, after all, was exceptional and transitory, and our American life still needs, beyond all things else, the more habitual cultivation of outdoor habits.

Probably the direct ethical influence of natural objects may be overrated. Nature is not didactic, but simply healthy. She helps everything to its legitimate development, but applies no goads, and forces on us no sharp distinctions. Her wonderful calmness, refreshing the whole soul, must aid both conscience and intellect in the end, but sometimes lulls both temporarily, when immediate issues are pending. The waterfall cheers and purifies infinitely, but it marks no moments, has no reproaches for indolence, forces to no immediate decision, offers unbounded to-morrows, and the man of action must tear himself away, when the time comes, since the work will not be done for him. "The natural day is very calm, and will hardly reprove our indolence."

And yet the more bent any man is upon action, the more profoundly he needs this very calmness of nature to preserve his equilibrium. The radical himself needs nothing so much as fresh air. The world is called conservative; but

it is far easier to impress a plausible thought on the complaisance of others, than to retain an unfaltering faith in it for ourselves. The most dogged reformer distrusts himself every little while, and says inwardly, like Luther, "Art thou alone wise?" So he is compelled to exaggerate, in the effort to hold his own. The community is bored by the conceit and egotism of the innovators; so it is by that of poets and artists, orators and statesmen; but if we knew how heavily ballasted all these poor fellows need to be, to keep an even keel amid so many conflicting tempests of blame and praise, we should hardly reproach them. But the simple enjoyments of outdoor life, costing next to nothing, tend to equalize all vexations. What matter if the governor removes you from office? he cannot remove you from the lake; and if readers or customers will not bite, the pickerel will. We must keep busy, of course; yet we cannot transform the world except very slowly, and we can best preserve our patience in the society of Nature, who does her work almost as imperceptibly as we.

And for literary training, especially, the influence of natural beauty is simply priceless. Under the present educational systems we need grammars and languages far less than a more thorough outdoor experience. On this flowery

bank, on this ripple-marked shore, are the true literary models. How many living authors have ever attained to writing a single page which could be for one moment compared, for the simplicity and grace of its structure, with this green spray of wild woodbine or yonder white wreath of blossoming clematis? A finely organized sentence should throb and palpitate like the most delicate vibrations of the summer air. We talk of literature as if it were a mere matter of rule and measurement, a series of processes long since brought to mechanical perfection: but it would be less incorrect to say that it all lies in the future; tried by the outdoor standard, there is as yet no literature, but only glimpses and guideboards; no writer has yet succeeded in sustaining, through more than some single occasional sentence, that fresh and perfect charm. If by the training of a lifetime one could succeed in producing one continuous page of perfect cadence, it would be a life well spent, and such a literary artist would fall short of nature's standard in quantity only, not in quality.

It is one sign of our weakness, also, that we commonly assume Nature to be a rather fragile and merely ornamental thing, and suited for a model of the graces only. But her seductive softness is the last climax of magnificent

strength. The same mathematical law winds the leaves around the stem and the planets around the sun. The same law of crystallization rules the slight-knit snowflake and the hard foundations of the earth. The thistledown floats secure upon the same summer zephyrs that are woven into the tornado. The dewdrop holds within its transparent cell the same electric fire which charges the thunder-cloud. In the softest tree or the airiest waterfall, the fundamental lines are as lithe and muscular as the crouching haunches of a leopard; and without a pencil vigorous enough to render these, no mere mass of foam or foliage, however exquisitely finished, can tell the story. Lightness of touch is the crowning test of power.

Yet nature does not work by single spasms only. That chestnut spray is not an isolated and exhaustive effort of creative beauty: look upward and see its sisters rise with pile above pile of fresh and stately verdure, till tree meets sky in a dome of glorious blossom, the whole as perfect as the parts, the least part as perfect as the whole. Studying the details, it seems as if Nature were a series of costly fragments with no coherence, — as if she would never encourage us to do anything systematically, — would tolerate no method but her own, and yet had none of her own, — were as abrupt in her tran-

sitions from oak to maple as the heroine who went into the garden to cut a cabbage leaf to make an apple-pie; while yet there is no conceivable human logic so close and inexorable as her connections. How rigid, how flexible are, for instance, the laws of perspective! If one could learn to make his statements as firm and unswerving as the horizon line, — his continuity of thought as marked, yet as unbroken, as yonder soft gradations by which the eye is lured upward from lake to wood, from wood to hill, from hill to heavens, — what more bracing tonic could literary culture demand? As it is, art misses the parts, yet does not grasp the whole.

Literature also learns from nature the use of materials: either to select only the choicest and rarest, or to transmute coarse to fine by skill in using. How perfect is the delicacy with which the woods and fields are kept throughout the year! All these millions of living creatures born every season, and born to die; yet where are the dead bodies? We never see them. Buried beneath the earth by tiny nightly sextons, sunk beneath the waters, dissolved into the air, or distilled again and again as food for other organizations, — all have had their swift resurrection. Their existence blooms again in these violet-petals, glitters in

the burnished beauty of these golden beetles, or enriches the veery's song. It is only out of doors that even death and decay become beautiful. The model farm, the most luxurious house, have their regions of unsightliness; but the fine chemistry of nature is constantly clearing away all its impurities before our eyes, and yet so delicately that we never suspect the process. The most exquisite work of literary art exhibits a certain crudeness and coarseness, when we turn to it from nature, — as the smallest cambric needle appears rough and jagged when compared through the magnifier with the tapering fineness of the insect's sting.

Once separated from nature, literature recedes into metaphysics, or dwindles into novels. How ignoble seems the current material of London literary life, for instance, compared with the noble simplicity which, a century ago, made the Lake Country an enchanted land forever. Compare the "enormity of pleasure" which De Quincey says Wordsworth derived from the simplest natural object, with the serious protest of Wilkie Collins against the affectation of caring about nature at all. "Is it not strange," says this unhappy man, "to see how little real hold the objects of the natural world amidst which we live can gain on our hearts and minds? We go to nature for comfort in

joy, and sympathy in trouble, only in books. . . . What share have the attractions of nature ever had in the pleasurable or painful interests and emotions of ourselves or our friends? . . . There is surely a reason for this want of inborn sympathy between the creature and the creation around it."

Leslie says of "the most original landscape painter he knew," meaning Constable, that, whenever he sat down in the fields to sketch, he endeavored to forget that he had ever seen a picture. In literature this is easy, the descriptions are so few and so faint. When Wordsworth was fourteen, he stopped one day by the wayside to observe the dark outline of an oak against the western sky; and he says that he was at that moment struck with "the infinite variety of natural appearances which had been unnoticed by the poets of any age or country," so far as he was acquainted with them, and "made a resolution to supply in some degree the deficiency." He spent a long life in studying and telling these beautiful wonders; and yet, so vast is the sum of them, they seem almost as undescribed as before, and men to be still as content with vague or conventional representations. On this continent, especially, people fancied that all must be tame and second-hand, everything long since duly

analyzed and distributed and put up in appropriate quotations, and nothing left for us poor American children but a preoccupied universe. And yet Thoreau camps down by Walden Pond, and shows us that absolutely nothing in nature has ever yet been described, — not a bird, nor a berry of the woods, nor a drop of water, nor a spicula of ice, nor summer, nor winter, nor sun, nor star.

Indeed, no person can portray nature from any slight or transient acquaintance. A reporter cannot step out between the sessions of a caucus and give a racy abstract of the landscape. It may consume the best hours of many days to certify for one's self the simplest outdoor fact, but every such piece of knowledge is intellectually worth the time. Even the driest and barest book of Natural History is good and nutritious, so far as it goes, if it represents genuine acquaintance; one can find summer in January by poring over the Latin catalogues of plants and insects. The most commonplace outdoor society has the same attraction. Every one of those old outlaws who haunt our New England ponds and marshes, water-soaked and soakers of something else, — intimate with the pure fluid in that familiarity which breeds contempt, — has yet a wholesome side when you explore his

knowledge of frost and freshet, pickerel and muskrat, and is exceedingly good company while you can keep him beyond scent of the tavern. Any intelligent farmer's boy can give you some narrative of outdoor observation which, so far as it goes, fulfils Milton's definition of poetry, "simple, sensuous, passionate." He may not write sonnets to the lake, but he will walk miles to bathe in it; he may not notice the sunsets, but he knows where to search for the blackbird's nest. How surprised the school-children looked, to be sure, when the Doctor of Divinity from the city tried to sentimentalize in addressing them about "the bobolink in the woods"! They knew that the darling of the meadow had no more personal acquaintance with the woods than was exhibited by the preacher.

But the preachers are not much worse than the authors. The prosaic Buckle, indeed, admits that the poets have in all time been consummate observers, and that their observations have been as valuable as those of the men of science; and yet we look even to the poets for very casual and occasional glimpses of Nature only, not for any continuous reflection of her glory. Thus, Chaucer is perfumed with early spring; Homer resounds like the sea; in the Greek Anthology the sun always shines on the

fisherman's cottage by the beach ; we associate the Vishnù Purana with lakes and lotuses, Keats with nightingales in forest dim, while the long grass waving on the lonely heath is the last memorial of the fading fame of Ossian. Of course Shakespeare's omniscience included all natural phenomena ; but the rest, great or small, associate themselves with some special aspects, and not with the daily atmosphere. Coming to our own times, one must quarrel with Ruskin as taking rather the artist's view of nature, selecting the available bits and dealing rather patronizingly with the whole ; and one is tempted to charge even Emerson, as he somewhere charges Wordsworth, with not being of a temperament quite liquid and musical enough to admit the full vibration of the great harmonies.

Yet what wonderful achievements have some of the fragmentary artists performed ! Some of Tennyson's word pictures, for instance, bear almost as much study as the landscape. One afternoon, last spring, I had been walking through a copse of young white birches, — their leaves scarce yet apparent, — over a ground delicate with wood-anemones, moist and mottled with dog-tooth violet leaves, and spangled with the delicate clusters of that shy creature, the Claytonia or Spring Beauty. All this was

floored with last year's faded foliage, giving a singular bareness and whiteness to the foreground. Suddenly, as if entering a cavern, I stepped through the edge of all this, into a dark little amphitheatre beneath a hemlock grove, where the afternoon sunlight struck broadly through the trees upon a tiny stream and a miniature swamp, — this last being intensely and luridly green, yet overlaid with the pale gray of last year's reeds, and absolutely flaming with the gayest yellow light from great clumps of cowslips. The illumination seemed perfectly weird and dazzling; the spirit of the place appeared live, wild, fantastic, almost human. Now open your Tennyson, —

"And the wild marsh marigold shines like fire in swamps and hollows gray."

Our cowslip, as I have already said, is the English marsh marigold.

History is a grander poetry, and it is often urged that the features of Nature in America must seem tame because they have no legendary wreaths to decorate them. It is perhaps hard for those of us who are untravelled to appreciate how densely even the rural parts of Europe are overgrown with this ivy of associations. Thus, it is fascinating to hear that the great French forests of Fontainebleau and St. Germain are full of historic trees, — the oak of

Charlemagne, the oak of Clovis, of Queen Blanche, of Henri Quatre, of Sully, — the alley of Richelieu, — the rendezvous of St. Hérem, — the star of Lamballe and of the Princesses, a star being a point where several paths or roads converge. It is said that every topographical work upon these forests has turned out to be a history of the French monarchy. Yet surely men lose nearly as much as they gain by such subordination of imperishable beauty to the perishable memories of man. It may not be wholly unfortunate, that in the absence of those influences which come to older nations from ruins and traditions, we must go more directly to nature. Art may either rest upon other art, or it may rest directly upon the original foundation; the one is easier, the other more valuable. Direct dependence on nature leads to deeper thought, and affords the promise of far fresher results. Why should I wish to enter upon indoor studies at Berlin or Heidelberg, when I possess the unexhausted treasures of this outdoor study here?

The walls of my study are of ever-changing verdure, and its roof and floor of ever-varying blue. I never enter it without a new heaven above and new thoughts below. The lake has no lofty shores and no level ones, but a series of undulating hills, fringed with woods from end

to end. The profaning axe may sometimes come near the margin, and one may hear the whetting of the scythe; but no cultivated land abuts upon the main lake, though beyond the narrow woods there are here and there glimpses of rye-fields, that wave like rolling mist. Graceful islands rise from the quiet waters, — Grape Island, Grass Island, Sharp Pine Island, and the rest, baptized with simple names by departed generations of farmers, — all wooded and bushy, and trailing with festoonery of vines. Here and there the banks are indented, and one may pass beneath drooping chestnut-leaves and among alder branches into some secret sanctuary of stillness. The emerald edges of these silent tarns are starred with dandelions which have strayed here, one scarce knows how, from their foreign home; the buck-bean perchance grows in the water, or the Rhodora fixes here one of its shy camping-places, or there are whole skies of lupine on the sloping banks; — the catbird builds its nest beside us, the yellow-bird above, the wood thrush sings late and the whip-poor-will later, and sometimes the scarlet tanager and his golden-haired bride send a gleam of the tropics through these leafy aisles.

Sometimes I rest in a yet more secluded place amid the waters, where a little wooded island holds a small lagoon in the centre, just

wide enough for the wherry to turn round. The entrance lies between two hornbeam trees, which stand close to the brink, spreading over it their thorn-like branches and their shining leaves. Within there is perfect shelter; the island forms a high, circular bank, like a coral reef, and shuts out the wind and the passing boats; the surface is paved with leaves of lily and pond-weed, and the boughs above are full of song. No matter what whitecaps may crest the blue waters of the pond, which here widens out to its broadest reach, there is always quiet here. A few oar-strokes away lies a dam or water-break, where the whole lake is held under control by certain distant mills, towards which a sluggish stream goes winding on through miles of water-lilies. The old gray timbers of the dam are the natural resort of every boy or boatman within their reach; some come in pursuit of pickerel, some of turtles, some of bull-frogs, some of lilies, some of bathing. It is a good place for the last desideratum, and it is well to leave here the boat tethered to the vines which overhang the cove, and perform a sacred and Oriental ablution beneath the sunny afternoon.

O radiant and divine afternoon! The poets profusely celebrate silver evenings and golden mornings; but what floods on floods of beauty

steep the earth and gladden it in the first hours of day's decline! The exuberant rays reflect and multiply themselves from every leaf and blade; the cows lie upon the hillside, with their broad, peaceful backs painted into the landscape; the hum of insects, "tiniest bells on the garment of silence," fills the air; the gorgeous butterflies doze upon the thistle-blooms till they almost fall from the petals; the air is full of warm fragrance from the wild-grape clusters; the grass is burning hot beneath the naked feet in sunshine, and cool as water in the shade. Diving from this overhanging beam, — for Ovid evidently meant that Midas to be cured must dive, —

"Subde caput, corpusque simul, simul eluе crinem," —

one finds as kindly a reception from the water as in childish days, and as safe a shelter in the green dressing-room afterwards; and the patient wherry floats near by, in readiness for a reëmbarkation.

Here a word seems needed, unprofessionally and non-technically, upon boats, — these being the sole seats provided for occupant or visitor in my outdoor study. When wherries first appeared in this peaceful inland community, the novel proportions occasioned remark. Facetious bystanders inquired sarcastically whether

that thing were expected to carry more than one, — plainly implying by labored emphasis that it would occasionally be seen tenanted by even less than that number. Transcendental friends inquired, with more refined severity, if the proprietor expected to meditate in that thing. This doubt at least seemed legitimate. Meditation seems to belong to sailing rather than rowing; there is something so gentle and unintrusive in gliding effortless beneath overhanging branches and along the trailing edges of clematis thickets; — what a privilege of fairy-land is this noiseless prow, looking in and out of one flowery cove after another, scarcely stirring the turtle from his log, and leaving no wake behind! It seemed as if all the process of rowing had too much noise and bluster, and as if the sharp, slender wherry, in particular, were rather too pert and dapper to win the confidence of the woods and waters. Time has dispelled the fear. As I rest poised upon the oars above some submerged shadow, diamonded with ripple-broken sunbeams, the fantastic Notonecta or water-boatman rests upon his oars below, and I see that his proportions anticipated the wherry, as honeycombs antedated the problem of the hexagonal cell. While one of us rests, so does the other; and when one shoots away rapidly above the water, the other

does the same beneath. For the time, as our motions seem the same, so with our motives, — my enjoyment certainly not less, with the conveniences of humanity thrown in.

But the sun is declining low. The club-boats are out, and from island to island in the distance these shafts of youthful life shoot swiftly across. There races some swift Atalanta, with no apple to fall in her path, but some soft and spotted oak-apple from an overhanging tree; there the Phantom, with a crew white and ghost-like in the distance, glimmers in and out behind the headlands, while yonder wherry glides lonely across the smooth expanse. The voices of all these oarsmen are dim and almost inaudible, being so far away; but one would scarcely wish that distance should annihilate the ringing laughter of these joyous girls, who come gliding, in a safe and heavy boat, they and some blue dragon-flies together, around yonder wooded point.

Many a summer afternoon have I rowed joyously with these same maidens beneath these steep and garlanded shores; many a time have they pulled the heavy four-oar, with me as coxswain at the helm, — the said patient steersman being ofttimes insulted by classical allusions from rival boats, satirically comparing him to an indolent Venus drawn by doves,

while the oarswomen, in turn, were likened to Minerva with her feet upon a tortoise. Many were the disasters in the earlier days of feminine training: — first of toilet, — straw hats blowing away, hair coming down, hairpins strewing the floor of the boat, gloves commonly happening to be off at the precise moment of starting, and trials of speed impaired by somebody's oar catching in somebody's pocket. Then the actual difficulties of handling the long and heavy oars, — the first essays at feathering, with a complicated splash of air and water, as when a wild duck, in rising, swims and flies together and uses neither element handsomely, — the occasional pulling of a particularly vigorous stroke through the atmosphere alone, and at other times the compensating disappearance of nearly the whole oar beneath the liquid surface, as if some Uncle Kühleborn had grasped it, while our Undine by main strength tugged it from the beguiling wave. But with what triumphant abundance of merriment were these preliminary disasters repaid, and how soon were they outgrown! What time we sometimes made, when nobody happened to be near with a watch, and how successfully we tossed oars in saluting, when the world looked on from a picnic! We had our applauses, too. To be sure, owing to the age and dimensions of the

original barge, we could not command such a burst of enthusiasm as when the young men shot by us in their race-boat; but then, as one of the girls justly remarked, we remained longer in sight.

And many a day, since promotion to a swifter craft, have they rowed with patient stroke down the lovely lake, still attended by their guide, philosopher, and coxswain, — along banks where herds of young birch-trees overspread the sloping valley, and ran down beneath a blaze of sunshine to the rippling water, — or through the Narrows, where some breeze rocked the boat till trailing shawls and ribbons were water-soaked, and the bold little foam would even send a daring drop over the gunwale, to play at ocean, — or to Davis's Cottage, where a whole parterre of lupines bloomed to the water's edge, as if relics of some ancient garden bower of a forgotten race, — or to the dam by Lily Pond, there to hunt among the stones for snakes' eggs, each empty shell cut crosswise, where the young creatures had made their first fierce bite into the universe outside, — or to some island, where white violets bloomed fragrant and lonely, separated by relentless breadths of water from their shore-born sisters, until mingled in their visitors' bouquets, — then up the lake homeward again

at nightfall, the boat all decked with clematis, clethra, laurel, azalea, or water-lilies, while purple sunset clouds turned forth their golden linings for drapery above our heads, and then, unrolling, sent northward long, roseate wreaths to outstrip our loitering speed, and reach the floating bridge before us.

It is nightfall now. One by one the birds grow silent, and the soft dragon-flies, children of the day, are fluttering noiselessly to their rest beneath the under sides of drooping leaves. From shadowy coves the evening air is thrusting forth a thin film of mist to spread a white floor above the waters. The gathering darkness deepens the quiet of the lake, and bids us, at least for this time, to forsake it. "*De soir fontaines, de matin montaignes,*" says the old French proverb, — Morning for labor, evening for repose.

VI

THE LIFE OF BIRDS

When one thinks of a bird, one fancies a soft, swift, aimless, joyous thing, full of nervous energy and arrowy motions, — a song with wings. So remote from ours their mode of existence, they seem accidental exiles from an unknown globe, banished where none can understand their language; and men only stare at their darting, inexplicable ways, as at the gyrations of the circus. Watch their little traits for hours, and it only tantalizes curiosity. Every man's secret is penetrable, if his neighbor be sharp-sighted. Dickens, for instance, can take a poor, condemned wretch, like Fagin, whose emotions neither he nor his reader has experienced, and can paint him in colors that seem made of the soul's own atoms, so that each beholder feels as if he, personally, had been the man. But this bird that hovers and alights beside me, peers up at me, takes its food, then looks again, attitudinizing, jerking, flirting his tail, with a thousand inquisitive and fantastic motions, — although I have power to grasp it

in my hand and crush its life out, yet I cannot gain its secret thus, and the centre of its consciousness is really farther from mine than the remotest planetary orbit. "We do not steadily bear in mind," says Darwin, with a noble humility, "how profoundly ignorant we are of the condition of existence of every animal."

What sympathetic penetration can fathom the life, for instance, of yonder mysterious, almost voiceless, Hummingbird, smallest of feathery things, and loneliest; whirring among birds, insect-like, and among insects, bird-like; his path untraceable, his home unseen? An image of airy motion, yet it sometimes seems as if there were nothing joyous in him. He seems like some exiled pygmy prince, banished, but still regal, and doomed to wings. Did gems turn to flowers, flowers to feathers, in that long, past dynasty of the Hummingbirds? It is strange to come upon his tiny nest, in some gray and tangled swamp, with this brilliant atom perched disconsolately near it, upon some mossy twig; it is like visiting Cinderella among her ashes. And from Hummingbird to Eagle, the daily existence of every bird is a remote and bewitching mystery.

Pythagoras has been charged, both before and since the days of Malvolio, with holding that "the soul of our grandam might haply in-

habit a fowl," — that delinquent men must revisit earth as women, and delinquent women as birds. Malvolio thought nobly of the soul, and in no way approved his opinion; but I remember that Harriet Prescott, in her school-days, accepted this, her destiny, with glee. "When I saw the Oriole," she wrote to me, "from his nest among the plum-trees in the garden, sail over the air and high above the Gothic arches of the elm, a stream of flashing light, or watched him swinging silently on pendent twigs, I did not dream how near akin we were. Or when a Hummingbird, a winged drop of gorgeous sheen and gloss, a living gem, poising on his wings, thrust his dark, slender, honey-seeking bill into the white blossoms of a little bush beside my window, I should have thought it no such bad thing to be a bird; even if one next became a bat, like the colony in our eaves, that dart and drop and skim and scurry, all the length of moonless nights, in such ecstasies of dusky joy." Was this weird creature, the bat, in very truth a bird, in some far primeval time? and does he fancy, in unquiet dreams at nightfall, that he is one still? I wonder whether he can enjoy the winged brotherhood into which he has thrust himself, — victim, perhaps, of some rash quadruped-ambition, — an Icarus, doomed forever not to fall.

I think that, if required, on pain of death, to name instantly the most perfect thing in the universe, I should risk my fate on a bird's egg. There is, first, its exquisite fragility of material, strong only by the mathematical precision of that form so daintily moulded. There is its absolute purity from external stain, since that thin barrier remains impassable until the whole is in ruins, — a purity recognized in the household proverb of "An apple, an egg, and a nut." Then, its range of tints, so varied, so subdued, and so beautiful, — whether of pure white, like the Martin's, or pure green, like the Robin's, or dotted and mottled into the loveliest of browns, like the Red Thrush's, or aquamarine, with stains of moss-agate, like the Chipping Sparrow's, or blotched with long, weird ink marks on a pale ground, like the Oriole's, as if it bore inscribed some magic clue to the bird's darting flight and pensile nest. Above all, the associations and predictions of this little wonder, — that one may bear home between his fingers all that winged splendor, all that celestial melody, coiled in mystery within these tiny walls! Even the chrysalis is less amazing, for its form always preserves some trace, however fantastic, of the perfect insect, and it is but moulting a skin; but this egg appears to the eye like a separate unit from some other kingdom

of nature, claiming more kindred with the very stones than with feathery existence; and it is as if a pearl opened and an angel sang.

The nest which is to contain these fair things is a wonderful study also, from the coarse masonry of the Robin to the soft structure of the Hummingbird, a baby house among nests. Among all created things, the birds come nearest to man in their domesticity. Their unions are usually in pairs, and for life; and with them, unlike the practice of most quadrupeds, the male labors for the young. He chooses the locality of the nest, aids in its construction, and fights for it, if needful. He sometimes assists in hatching the eggs. He feeds the brood with exhausting labor, like yonder Robin, whose winged picturesque day is spent in putting worms into insatiable beaks, at the rate of one morsel in every three minutes. He has to teach them to fly, as among the Swallows, or even to hunt, as among the Hawks. His life is anchored to his home. Yonder Oriole fills with light and melody the thousand branches of a neighborhood; and yet the centre for all this divergent splendor is always that one drooping dome upon one chosen tree. This he helped to build in May, confiscating cotton as if he were an army provost-marshal, and singing many songs, with his mouth full of plunder;

and there he watches over his household, all through the leafy June, perched often upon the airy cradle edge, and swaying with it in the summer wind. And from this deep nest, after the pretty eggs are hatched, will he and his mate extract every fragment of the shell, leaving it, like all other nests, save those of birds of prey, clean and pure, when the young are flown. This they do chiefly from an instinct of delicacy, since wood-birds are not wont to use the same nest a second time, even if they rear several broods in a season.

The subdued tints and notes which almost always mark the female sex, among birds, — unlike insects and human beings, where the female is often more showy than the male, — seem designed to secure their safety while sitting on the nest, while the brighter colors and louder song of the male enable his domestic circle to detect his whereabouts more easily. It is commonly noticed, in the same way, that ground-birds have more neutral tints than those which build out of reach. With the aid of these advantages, it is astonishing how well these roving creatures keep their secrets, and what sharp eyes are needed to spy out their habitations, — while it always seems as if the empty last year's nests were very plenty. Some, indeed, are very elaborately concealed, as of the

Golden-crowned Thrush, called, for this reason, the Oven-bird, — the Meadowlark, with its burrowed gallery among the grass, — and the Kingfisher, which mines four feet into the earth. Many of the rarer nests would hardly be discovered, only that the maternal instinct seems sometimes so overloaded by nature as to defeat itself, and the bird flies and chirps in agony, when she might pass unnoticed by keeping still. The most marked exception I have noticed is that of the Red Thrush, which, in this respect, as in others, has the most high-bred manners among all our birds: both male and female sometimes flit in perfect silence through the bushes, and show solicitude only in a sob that is scarcely audible.

Passing along the shore-path by our lake, one day in June, I heard a great sound of scuffling and yelping before me, as if dogs were hunting rabbits or woodchucks. On approaching I saw no sign of such disturbances, and presently a Partridge came running at me through the trees, with ruff and tail expanded, bill wide open, and hissing like a goose, — then turned suddenly, and with ruff and tail furled, but with no pretence of lameness, scudded off through the woods in a circle, — then at me again fiercely, approaching within two yards, and spreading all her furbelows, to intimidate, as

before, — then, taking in sail, went off again, always at the same rate of speed, yelping like an angry squirrel, squealing like a pig, occasionally clucking like a hen, and in general so filling the woods with bustle and disturbance that there seemed no room for anything else. Quite overawed by the display, I stood watching her for some time, then entered the underbrush, where the little, invisible brood had been unceasingly piping, in their baby way. So motionless were they, that, for all their noise, I stood with my feet among them, for some minutes, without finding it possible to detect them. When found and taken from the ground, which they so closely resembled, they made no attempt to escape; but when replaced, they presently ran away fast, as if conscious that the first policy had failed, and that their mother had retreated. Such is the summer life of these little things; but come again in the fall, when the wild autumnal winds go marching through the woods, and a dozen pairs of strong wings will thrill like thunder through the arches of the trees, as the full-grown brood whirs away around you.

Not only have we scarcely any species of birds which are thoroughly and unquestionably identical with European species, but there are certain general variations of habit. For in-

stance, in regard to migration. This is, of course, a universal instinct, since even tropical birds migrate for short distances from the equator, so essential to their existence do these wanderings seem. But in New England, among birds as among men, the roving habit seems unusually strong, and abodes are shifted very rapidly. The whole number of species observed in Massachusetts is about the same as in England, — some three hundred in all. But of this number, in England, about a hundred habitually winter on the island, and half that number even in the Hebrides, some birds actually breeding in Scotland during January and February, incredible as it may seem. Their habits can, therefore, be observed through a long period of the year; while with us the bright army comes and encamps for a month or two and then vanishes. You must attend their dress-parades while they last; for you will have but few opportunities, and their domestic life must commonly be studied during a few weeks of the season, or not at all.

Wonderful as the instinct of migration seems, it is not, perhaps, so altogether amazing in itself as in some of its attendant details. To a great extent, birds follow the open foliage northward, and flee from its fading, south; they must keep near the food on which they live,

and secure due shelter for their eggs. Our earliest visitors shrink from trusting the bare trees with their nests; the Song Sparrow seeks the ground; the Bluebird finds a box or a hole somewhere; the Red-winged Blackbird haunts the marshy thickets, safer in spring than at any other season; and even the sociable Robin prefers a pine-tree to an apple-tree, if resolved to begin housekeeping prematurely. The movements of birds are chiefly timed by the advance of vegetation; and the thing most thoroughly surprising about them is not the general fact of the change of latitude, but their accuracy in hitting the precise locality. That the same Catbird should find its way back, every spring, to almost the same branch of yonder larch-tree, — that is the thing astonishing to me. In England, a lame Redstart was observed in the same garden for sixteen successive years; and the astonishing precision of course which enables some birds of small size to fly from Australia to New Zealand in a day — probably the longest single flight ever taken — is only a part of the same mysterious instinct of direction.

In comparing modes of flight, the most surprising, of course, is that of the Swallow tribe, remarkable not merely for its velocity, but for the amazing boldness and instantaneousness of the angles it makes; so that eminent European

mechanicians have speculated in vain upon the methods used in its locomotion, and prizes have been offered, by mechanical exhibitions, to him who could best explain it. With impetuous dash they sweep through our perilous streets, these wild hunters of the air, "so near, and yet so far;" they bathe flying, and flying they feed their young. In my immediate vicinity, the Chimney Swallow is not now common, nor the Sand Swallow; but the Cliff Swallow, that strange emigrant from the Far West, the Barn Swallow, and the white-breasted species are abundant, together with the Purple Martin. I know no prettier sight than a bevy of these bright little creatures, met from a dozen different farmhouses to picnic at a wayside pool, splashing and fluttering, with their long wings expanding like butterflies, keeping poised by a constant hovering motion, just tilting upon their feet, which scarcely touch the moist ground. You will seldom see them actually perch on anything less airy than some telegraphic wire; but when they alight, each will make chatter enough for a dozen, as if all the rushing hurry of the wings had passed into the tongue.

Between the swiftness of the Swallow and the stateliness of the birds of prey, the whole range of bird motion seems included. The long

wave of a Hawk's wings seems almost to send a slow vibration through the atmosphere, tolling upon the eye as yon distant bell upon the ear. I never was more impressed with the superior dignity of these soarings than in observing a bloodless contest in the air last April. Standing beside a little grove on a rocky hillside, I heard Crows cawing near by, and then a sound like great flies buzzing, which I really attributed, for a moment, to some early insect. Turning, I saw two Crows flapping their heavy wings among the trees, and observed that they were teasing a Hawk about as large as themselves, which was also on the wing. Presently all three had risen above the branches, and were circling higher and higher in a slow spiral. The Crows kept constantly swooping at their enemy, with the same angry buzz, one of the two taking decidedly the lead. They seldom struck at him with their beaks, but kept lumbering against him, and flapping him with their wings, as if in a fruitless effort to capsize him; while the Hawk kept carelessly eluding the assaults, now inclining on one side, now on the other, with a stately grace, never retaliating, but seeming rather to enjoy the novel amusement, as if it were a skirmish in balloons. During all this, indeed, he scarcely seemed once to wave his wings, yet he soared steadily aloft, till

the Crows refused to follow, though already higher than I ever saw Crows before, dim against the fleecy sky; then the Hawk flew northward, but soon after he sailed over us once again, with loud, scornful *chirr*, and they only cawed, and left him undisturbed.

When we hear the tumult of music from these various artists of the air, it seems as if the symphony never could be analyzed into its different instruments. But with time and patience it is not so difficult; nor can we really enjoy the performance so long as it is only a confused chorus to our ears. It is not merely the highest form of animal language, but in strictness of etymology the only form, if it be true, as is claimed, that no other animal employs its tongue, *lingua*, in producing sound. In the Middle Ages, the song of birds was called their Latin, as was any other foreign dialect. It was the old German superstition, that any one who should eat the heart of a bird would thenceforth comprehend its language; and one modern philologist of the same nation (Masius declares) has so far studied the sounds produced by domestic fowls as to announce a Goose-Lexicon. Dupont de Nemours asserted that he understood eleven words of the Pigeon language, the same number of that of Fowls, fourteen of the Cat tongue, twenty-two of that of Cattle, thirty

of that of Dogs, and the Raven language he understood completely. But the ordinary observer seldom attains farther than to comprehend some of the cries of anxiety and fear around him, often so unlike the accustomed carol of the bird, — as the mew of the Catbird, the lamb-like bleating of the Veery and his impatient *yeoick*, the *chaip* of the Meadowlark, the *towyee* of the Chewink, the petulant *psit* and *tsee* of the Red-winged Blackbird, and the hoarse cooing of the Bobolink. With some of our most familiar birds the variety of notes is at its greatest. I have watched two Song Sparrows, perched near each other, in whom the spyglass could show not the slightest difference of marking, even in the characteristic stains upon the breast, who yet chanted to each other, for fifteen minutes, over and over, two elaborate songs which had nothing in common. I have observed a similar thing in two Wood Sparrows, with their sweet, distinct, monotonous note; nor can I find it stated that the difference is sexual. Who can claim to have heard the whole song of the Robin? Taking shelter from a shower beneath an oak-tree, the other day, I caught a few of the notes which one of those cheery creatures, who love to sing in wet weather, tossed down to me through the drops.

(Before noticing me,)	*chirrup, cheerup ;*
(pausing in alarm, at my approach,)	*che, che, che ;*
(broken presently by a thoughtful strain,)	*caw, caw ;*
(then softer and more confiding,)	*see, see, see ;*
(then the original note, in a whisper,)	*chirrup, cheerup ;*
(often broken by a soft note,)	*see, wee ;*
(and an odder one,)	*squeal ;*
(and a mellow note,)	*tweedle.*

And all these were mingled with more complex combinations, and with half imitations, as of the Bluebird, so that it seemed almost impossible to doubt that there was some specific meaning, to him and his peers, in this endless vocabulary. Yet other birds, as quick-witted as the Robins, possess but one or two chirping notes, to which they seem unable to give more than the very rudest variation of accent.

The controversy concerning the singing birds of Europe and America has had various phases and influential disputants. Buffon easily convinced himself that our Thrushes had no songs, because the voices of all birds grew harsh in savage countries, such as he naturally held this continent to be. Audubon, on the other hand, relates that even in his childhood he was assured by his father that the American songsters were the best, though neither Americans nor Europeans could be convinced of it. MacGillivray, the Scottish naturalist, reports that Audubon himself, in conversation, arranged

our vocalists in the following order : first the Mockingbird, as unrivalled; then the Wood Thrush, the Catbird, and Red Thrush; the Rose-breasted, Pine, and Blue Grosbeak; the Orchard and Golden Oriole; the Tawny and Hermit Thrushes; several Finches, — Bachmann's, the White-crowned, the Indigo, and the Nonpareil; and, finally, the Bobolink.

Among those birds of this list which frequent Massachusetts, the Hermit Thrush stands at the head. As I sat the other day in the deep woods beside a black brook which dropped from stone to stone beneath the shadow of our Rattlesnake Rocks, the air seemed at first as silent above me as the earth below. The buzz of summer sounds had not begun. Sometimes a bee hummed by with a long, swift thrill like a chord of music; sometimes a breeze came resounding up the forest like an approaching locomotive, and then died utterly away. Then, at length, a Veery's delicious note rose in a fountain of liquid melody from beneath me; and when it was ended, the clear, calm, interrupted chant of the Hermit Thrush fell like solemn water-drops from some source above. I am acquainted with no sound in nature so sweet, so elevated, so serene. Flutes and flageolets are art's poor efforts to recall that softer sound. It is simple, and seems all prelude; but the

music to which it is the overture belongs to other spheres. It might be the *Angelus* of some lost convent. It might be the meditation of some maiden hermit, saying over to herself in solitude, with recurrent tuneful pauses, the only song she knows. Beside this soliloquy of seraphs, the carol of the Veery seems a familiar and almost domestic thing; yet it is so charming that Aububon must have designed to include this among the Thrushes whose merits he proclaims.

But the range of musical perfection is a wide one; and if the standard of excellence be that wondrous brilliancy and variety of execution suggested by the Mockingbird, then the palm belongs, among our New England songsters, to the Red Thrush, otherwise called the Mavis or Brown Thrasher. I know not how to describe the voluble and fantastic notes which fall like pearls and diamonds from the beak of our Mavis, while his stately attitudes and high-born bearing are in full harmony with the song. I recall the steep, bare hillside, and the two great boulders which guard the lonely grove, where I first fully learned the wonder of this lay, as if I had met St. Cecilia there. A thoroughly happy song, overflowing with life, it gives even its most familiar phrases an air of gracious condescension, as when some great violinist stoops

to the "Carnival of Venice." The Red Thrush does not, however, consent to any parrot-like mimicry, though every note of wood or field — Oriole, Bobolink, Crow, Jay, Robin, Whip-poor-will — appears to pass in veiled procession through the song.

Retain the execution of the Red Thrush but hopelessly impair his organ, and you have the Catbird. This accustomed visitor would seem a gifted vocalist but for the inevitable comparison between his thinner note and the gushing melodies of the lordlier bird. Is it some hopeless consciousness of this disadvantage which leads him to pursue that peculiar habit of singing softly to himself very often in a fancied seclusion? When other birds are cheerily out of doors, on some bright morning in May or June, one will often discover a solitary Catbird sitting concealed in the middle of a dense bush, and twittering busily, in subdued rehearsal, the whole copious variety of his lay, practising trills and preparing half imitations, which at some other time, sitting on the topmost twig, he shall hilariously seem to improvise before all the world. Can it be that he is really in some slight disgrace with nature, with that demi-mourning garb of his, and that his feline cry of terror, which makes his opprobrium with boys, is but a part of some hid-

den doom? No, the lovely color of the eggs which his companion watches on that laboriously builded staging of twigs shall vindicate this familiar companion from any suspicion of original sin.

Indeed, it is well demonstrated by our American oölogist, Dr. Brewer, that the eggs of the Catbird affiliate him with the Robin and the Wood Thrush, all three being widely separated in this respect from the Red Thrush. The Red Thrush builds on the ground, and has mottled eggs; while the whole household establishment of the Wood Thrush is scarcely distinguishable from that of the Robin, and the Catbird differs chiefly in being more of a carpenter and less of a mason.

The Rose-breasted Grosbeak, which Audubon places so high on his list of minstrels, comes annually to one region in this vicinity, but I am not sure of having heard it. The young Pine Grosbeaks come to our woods in winter, and have then but a subdued twitter. Every one knows the Bobolink; and almost all recognize the Oriole, by sight at least, even if unfamiliar with all the notes of his cheery and resounding song. The Red-eyed Flycatcher, heard even more constantly, is less generally identified by name; but his note sounds all day among the elms of our streets, and seems

a sort of piano adaptation, popularized for the million, of the rich notes of the Thrushes. He is not mentioned by Audubon among his favorites, and has no right to complain of the exclusion. Yet the birds which most endear summer are not necessarily the finest performers; and certainly there is none whose note I could spare less easily than the little Chipping Sparrow, called hereabouts the Hairbird. To lie half awake on a warm morning in June, and hear that soft, insect-like chirp draw in and out with long, melodious pulsations, like the rising and falling of the human breath, condenses for my ear the whole luxury of summer. Later in the day, among the multiplicity of noises, the chirping becomes louder and more detached, losing that faint and dream-like thrill.

The bird-notes which have the most familiar fascination are perhaps simply those most intimately associated with other rural things. This applies especially to the earliest spring songsters. Listening to these delicious prophets upon some of those still and moist days which slip in between the rough winds of March, and fill our lives for a moment with anticipated delights, it seems as if their varied notes were sent to symbolize all the different elements of spring association. The Bluebird appears to represent simply spring's faint, tremulous, liquid sweet-

ness, the Song Sparrow its changing pulsations of more positive and varied joy, and the Robin its cheery and superabundant vitality. The later birds of the season, suggesting no such fine-drawn sensations, yet identify themselves with their chosen haunts, so that we cannot think of the one without the other. In the meadows we hear the languid and tender drawl of the Meadowlark, — one of the most peculiar of notes, almost amounting to affectation in its excess of laborious sweetness. When we reach the thickets and wooded streams, there is no affectation in the Maryland Yellow-throat, that little restless busybody, with his eternal *which-is-it, which-is-it, which-is-it,* emphasizing each syllable at will, in despair of response. Passing into the loftier woods, we find them resounding with the loud proclamation of the Golden-crowned Thrush, — *scheat, scheat, scheat, scheat,* — rising and growing louder in its vigorous way. And penetrating to some yet lonelier place, we find it consecrated to that life-long sorrow, whatever it may be, which is made immortal in the plaintive cadence of the Pewee Flycatcher.

There is one favorite bird, — the Chewink, or Ground Robin, — which I always fancied must have been known to Keats when he wrote those few words of perfect descriptiveness, —

"If an innocent bird
Before my heedless footsteps *stirred and stirred*
In little journeys."

What restless spirit is in this creature, that, while so shy in its own personal habits, it yet watches every visitor with a Paul Pry curiosity, follows him in the woods, peers out among the underbrush, scratches upon the leaves with a pretty pretence of important business there, and presently, when disregarded, ascends some small tree and begins to carol its monotonous song, as if there were no such thing as man in the universe? There is something irregular and fantastic in the coloring, also, of the Chewink; unlike the generality of ground-birds, it is a showy thing, with black, white, and bay intermingled, and it is one of the most unmistakable of all our feathery creatures, in its aspect and its ways.

Another of my favorites, perhaps from our sympathy as to localities, since we meet freely every summer at a favorite lake, is the Kingbird, or Tyrant Flycatcher. The habits of royalty or tyranny I have never been able to perceive, — only a democratic habit of resistance to tyrants; but this bird always impresses me as a perfectly well-dressed and well-mannered person, who amid a very talkative society prefers to listen, and shows his character by action

only. So long as he sits silently on some stake or bush in the neighborhood of his family circle, you notice only his glossy black cap and the white feathers in his handsome tail; but let a Hawk or a Crow come near, and you find that he is something more than a mere lazy listener to the Bobolink: far up in the air, determined to be thorough in his chastisements, you will see him, with a comrade or two, driving the bulky intruder away into the distance, till you wonder how he ever expects to find his own way back again. He speaks with emphasis on these occasions, and then reverts, more sedately than ever, to his accustomed silence.

We know but little, even now, of the local distribution of our birds. I remember that in my very last conversation with Thoreau, in December, 1861, he mentioned most remarkable facts in this department, which had fallen under his unerring eyes. The Hawk most common at Concord, the Red-tailed species, is not known near the seashore, twenty miles off, — as at Boston or Plymouth. The White-breasted Sparrow is rare in Concord; but the Ashburnham woods, thirty miles away, are full of it. The Scarlet Tanager's is the commonest note in Concord, except the Red-eyed Flycatcher's; yet one of the best field ornithologists in Boston had never heard it. The Rose-breasted

Grosbeak is seen not infrequently at Concord, though its nest is rarely found; but in Minnesota Thoreau found it more abundant than any other bird, far more so than the Robin. But his most interesting statement, to my fancy, was that, during a stay of ten weeks on Monadnock, he found that the Snowbird built its nest on the top of the mountain, and probably never came down through the season. That was its Arctic; and it would probably yet be found, he predicted, on Wachusett and other Massachusetts peaks. It is known that the Snowbird, or "Snowflake," as it is called in England, was reported by Audubon as having only once been proved to build in the United States, namely, among the White Mountains, though Wilson found its nests among the Alleghanies; and in New England it used to be the rural belief that the Snowbird and the Chipping Sparrow were the same.

After July most of our birds grow silent, and but for the insects August would be almost the stillest month in the year, — stiller than the winter, when the woods are often vocal with the Crow, the Jay, and the Chickadee. But with patient attention one may hear, even far into the autumn, the accustomed notes. As I sat in my boat, one sunny afternoon of last September, beneath the shady

western shore of our quiet lake, with the low sunlight striking almost level across the wooded banks, it seemed as if the last hoarded drops of summer's sweetness were being poured over all the world. The air was full of quiet sounds. Turtles rustled beside the brink and slid into the water; cows plashed in the shallows; fishes leaped from the placid depths; a squirrel sobbed and fretted on a neighboring stump; a katydid across the lake maintained its hard, dry croak; the crickets chirped pertinaciously, but with little, fatigued pauses, as if glad that their work was almost done; the grasshoppers kept up their continual chant, which seemed thoroughly melted and amalgamated into the summer, as if it would go on indefinitely, though the body of the little creature were dried into dust. All this time the birds were silent and invisible, as if they would take no more part in the symphony of the year. Then, seemingly by preconcerted signal, they joined in: Crows cawed anxiously afar; Jays screamed in the woods; a Partridge clucked to its brood, like the gurgle of water from a bottle; a Kingfisher wound his rattle, more briefly than in spring, as if we now knew all about it and the merest hint ought to suffice; a Fishhawk flapped into the water, with a great, rude splash, and then flew heavily away; a flock of

Wild Ducks went southward overhead, and a smaller party returned beneath them, flying low and anxiously, as if to pick up some lost baggage; and at last a Loon laughed loud from behind a distant island, and it was pleasant to people these woods and waters with that wild shouting, linking them with Katahdin Lake and Amperzand.

But the later the birds linger in the autumn, the more their aspect differs from that of spring. In spring they come, jubilant, noisy, triumphant, from the South, the winter conquered and the long journey done. In autumn they come timidly from the North, and, pausing on their anxious retreat, lurk within the fading copses and twitter snatches of song as fading. Others fly as openly as ever, but gather in flocks, as the Robins, most piteous of all birds at this season, — thin, faded, ragged, their bold note sunk to a feeble quaver, and their manner a mere caricature of that inexpressible military smartness with which they held up their heads in May.

Yet I cannot really find anything sad even in November. When I think of the thrilling beauty of the season past, the birds that came and went, the insects that took up the choral song as the birds grew silent, the procession of the flowers, the glory of autumn, — and when

I think that, this also ended, a new gallery of wonder is opening, almost more beautiful, in the magnificence of frost and snow, — there comes an impression of affluence and liberality in the universe which seasons of changeless and uneventful verdure would never give. The catkins already formed on the alder, quite prepared to droop into April's beauty, — the white edges of the Mayflower's petals, already visible through the bud, show in advance that winter is but a slight and temporary retardation of the life of nature, and that the barrier which separates November from March is not really more solid than that which parts the sunset from the sunrise.

VII

SNOW

All through the long hours of yesterday the low clouds hung close above our heads, to pour with more unswerving aim their constant storm of sleet and snow, — sometimes working in soft silence, sometimes with impatient gusty breaths, but always busily at work. Darkness brought no rest to these laborious warriors of the air, but only fiercer strife: the wild winds rose; noisy recruits, they howled beneath the eaves, or swept around the walls, like hungry wolves, now here, now there, howling at opposite doors. Thus, through the anxious and wakeful night, the storm went on. The household lay vexed by broken dreams, with changing fancies of lost children on solitary moors, of sleighs hopelessly overturned in drifted and pathless gorges, or of icy cordage upon disabled vessels in Arctic seas; until a softer warmth, as of sheltering snow-wreaths, lulled all into deeper rest till morning.

And what a morning! The sun, a young conqueror, sends in his glorious rays, like her-

alds, to rouse us for the inspection of his trophies. The baffled foe, retiring, has left far and near the high-heaped spoils behind. The glittering plains own the new victor. Over all these level and wide-swept meadows, over all these drifted, spotless slopes, he is proclaimed undisputed monarch. On the wooded hillsides the startled shadows are in motion; they flee like young fawns, bounding upward and downward over rock and dell, as through the long gleaming arches the sun comes marching to his throne. But shade yet lingers undisturbed in the valleys, mingled with timid smoke from household chimneys; blue as the smoke, a gauzy haze is twined around the brow of every distant hill; and the same soft azure confuses the outlines of the nearer trees, to whose branches snowy wreaths are clinging, far up among the boughs, like strange new flowers. Everywhere the unstained surface glistens in the sunbeams. In the curves and wreaths and turrets of the drifts a blue tinge nestles. The fresh pure sky answers to it; every cloud has vanished, save one or two which linger near the horizon, pardoned offenders, seeming far too innocent for mischief, although their dark and sullen brothers, banished ignominiously below the horizon's verge, may be plotting nameless treachery there. The brook still flows visibly

through the valley, and the myriad rocks that check its course are all rounded with fleecy surfaces, till they seem like flocks of tranquil sheep that drink the shallow flood.

The day is one of moderate cold, but clear and bracing; the air sparkles like the snow; everything seems dry and resonant, like the wood of a violin. All sounds are musical, — the voices of children, the cooing of doves, the crowing of cocks, the chopping of wood, the creaking of country sleds, the sweet jangle of sleigh-bells. The snow has fallen under a cold temperature, and the flakes are perfectly crystallized; every shrub we pass bears wreaths which glitter as gorgeously as the nebula in the constellation Perseus; but in another hour of sunshine every one of those fragile outlines will disappear, and the white surface glitter no longer with stars but with star-dust. On such a day, the universe seems to hold but three pure tints, — blue, white, and green. The loveliness of the universe seems simplified to its last extreme of refined delicacy. That sensation we poor mortals often have, of being just on the edge of infinite beauty, yet with always a lingering film between, never presses down more closely than on days like this. Everything seems perfectly prepared to satiate the soul with inexpressible felicity, if we could only,

by one infinitesimal step farther, reach the mood to dwell in it.

Leaving behind us the sleighs and snow-shovels of the street, we turn noiselessly toward the radiant margin of the sunlit woods. The yellow willows on the causeway burn like flame against the darker background, and will burn on until they burst into April. Yonder pines and hemlocks stand motionless and dark against the sky. The statelier trees have already shaken all the snow from their summits, but it still clothes the lower ones with a white covering that looks solid as marble. Yet see how lightly it escapes! — a slight gust shakes a single tree, there is a *Staub-bach* for a moment, and the branches stand free as in summer, a pyramid of green amid the whiteness of the yet imprisoned forest. Each branch raises itself when emancipated, thus changing the whole outline of the growth; and the snow beneath is punctured with a thousand little depressions, where the petty avalanches have just buried themselves and disappeared.

In crossing this white level, we have been tracking our way across an invisible pond, which was alive last week with five hundred skaters. Now there is a foot of snow upon it, through which there is a boyish excitement in making the first path. Looking back upon our track,

it proves to be like all other human paths, straight in intention, but slightly devious in deed. We have gay companions on our way; for a breeze overtakes us, and a hundred little simooms of drift whirl along beside us, and overwhelm in miniature burial whole caravans of dry leaves. Here, too, our track intersects with that of some previous passer; he has but just gone on, judging by the freshness of the trail, and we can study his character and purposes. The large boots betoken a woodman or iceman; yet such a one would hardly have stepped so irresolutely where a little film of water has spread between the ice and snow and given a look of insecurity; and here again he has stopped to observe the wreaths on this pendent bough, and this snow-filled bird's nest. And there the footsteps of the lover of beauty turn abruptly to the road again, and he vanishes from us forever.

As we wander on through the wood, all the labyrinths of summer are buried beneath one white inviting pathway, and the pledge of perfect loneliness is given by the unbroken surface of the all-revealing snow. There appears nothing living except a downy woodpecker, whirling round and round upon a young beech stem, and a few sparrows, plump with grass seed and hurrying with jerking flight down the sunny

glade. But the trees furnish society enough. What a congress of ermined kings is this circle of hemlocks, which stand, white in their soft raiment, around the dais of this woodland pond! Are they held here, like the sovereigns in the palace of the Sleeping Beauty, till some mortal breaks their spell? What sage counsels must be theirs, as they nod their weary heads and whisper ghostly memories and old men's tales to each other, while the red leaves dance on the snowy sward below, or a fox or squirrel steals hurriedly through the wild and wintry night! Here and there is some discrowned Lear, who has thrown off his regal mantle, and stands in faded russet, misplaced among the monarchs.

What a simple and stately hospitality is that of nature in winter! The season which the residents of cities think an obstruction is in the country an extension of intercourse: it opens every forest from here to Labrador, free of entrance; the most tangled thicket, the most treacherous marsh, becomes passable; and the lumberman or moose hunter, mounted on his snowshoes, has the world before him. He says "good snowshoeing," as we say "good sleighing;" and it gives a sensation like a first visit to the seaside and the shipping, when one first sees exhibited for sale, in the streets of Bangor or Montreal, these delicate Indian conveyances.

It seems as if a new element were suddenly opened for travel, and all due facilities provided. One expects to go a little farther, and see in the shop windows, "Wings for sale, — gentlemen's and ladies' sizes." The snowshoe and the birch canoe, — what other dying race ever left behind it two memorials so perfect and so graceful?

The shadows thrown by the trees upon the snow are blue and soft, sharply defined, and so contrasted with the gleaming white as to appear narrower than the boughs which cast them. There is something subtle and fantastic about these shadows. Here is a leafless larch sapling, eight feet high. The image of the lower boughs is traced upon the snow, distinct and firm as cordage, while the higher ones grow dimmer by fine gradations, until the slender topmost twig is blurred, and almost effaced. But the denser upper spire of the young spruce by its side throws almost as distinct a shadow as its base, and the whole figure looks of a more solid texture, as if you could feel it with your hand. More beautiful than either is the fine image of this baby hemlock: each delicate leaf droops above as delicate a copy, and here and there the shadow and the substance kiss and frolic with each other in the downy snow.

The larger larches have a different plaything:

on the bare branches, thickly studded with buds, cling airily the small, light cones of last year's growth, each crowned with a little ball of soft snow, four times taller than itself, — save where some have drooped sideways, so that each carries, poor weary Atlas, a sphere upon its back. Thus the coy creatures play cup and ball, and one has lost its plaything yonder, as the branch slightly stirs, and the whole vanishes in a whirl of snow. Meanwhile a fragment of low arbor-vitæ hedge, poor outpost of a neighboring plantation, is so covered and packed with solid drift, inside and out, that it seems as if no power of sunshine could ever steal in among its twigs and disentangle it.

In winter each separate object interests us; in summer, the mass. Natural beauty in winter is a poor man's luxury, infinitely enhanced in quality by the diminution in quantity. Winter, with fewer and simpler methods, yet seems to give all her works a finish even more delicate than that of summer, working, as Emerson says of English agriculture, with a pencil, instead of a plough. Or rather, the ploughshare is but concealed; since a pithy old English preacher has said that "the frost is God's plough, which he drives through every inch of ground in the world, opening each clod, and pulverizing the whole."

Coming out upon a high hillside, more exposed to the direct fury of the sleet, we find nature wearing a wilder look. Every white birch clump around us is bent divergingly to the ground, each white form prostrated in mute despair upon the whiter bank. The bare, writhing branches of that sombre oak grove are steeped in snow, and in the misty air they look so remote and foreign that there is not a wild creature of the Norse mythology who might not stalk from beneath their haunted branches. Buried races, Teutons and Cimbri, might tramp solemnly forth from those weird arcades. The soft pines on this nearer knoll seem separated from them by ages and generations. On the farther hills spread woods of smaller growth, like forests of spun glass, jewelry by the acre provided for this coronation of winter.

We descend a steep bank, little pellets of snow rolling hastily beside us, and leaving enamelled furrows behind. Entering the sheltered and sunny glade, we are assailed by a sudden warmth whose languor is almost oppressive. Wherever the sun strikes upon the pines and hemlocks, there is a household gleam which gives a more vivid sensation than the diffused brilliancy of summer. The sunbeams maintain a thousand secondary fires in the reflection of light from every tree and stalk, for the preser-

vation of animal life and ultimate melting of these accumulated drifts. Around each trunk or stone the snow has melted and fallen back. It is a singular fact, established beyond doubt by science, that the snow is absolutely less influenced by the direct rays of the sun than by these reflections. "If a blackened card is placed upon the snow or ice in the sunshine, the frozen mass underneath it will be gradually thawed, while that by which it is surrounded, though exposed to the full power of solar heat, is but little disturbed. If, however, we reflect the sun's rays from a metal surface, an exactly contrary result takes place: the uncovered parts are the first to melt, and the blackened card stands high above the surrounding portion." Look round upon this buried meadow, and you will see emerging through the white surface a thousand stalks of grass, sedge, osmunda, goldenrod, mullein, Saint John's-wort, plantain, and eupatorium, — an allied army of the sun, keeping up a perpetual volley of innumerable rays upon the yielding snow.

It is their last dying service. We misplace our tenderness in winter, and look with pity upon the leafless trees. But there is no tragedy in the trees: each is not dead, but sleepeth; and each bears a future summer of buds safe nestled on its bosom, as a mother reposes

with her baby at her breast. The same security of life pervades every woody shrub: the alder and the birch have their catkins all ready for the first day of spring, and the sweet fern has even now filled with fragrance its folded blossom. Winter is no such solid bar between season and season as we fancy, but only a slight check and interruption: one may at any time produce these March blossoms by bringing the buds into the warm house; and the petals of the Mayflower sometimes show their pink and white edges in autumn. But every grass blade and flower stalk is a mausoleum of vanished summer, itself crumbling to dust, never to rise again. Each child of June, scarce distinguishable in November against the background of moss and rocks and bushes, is brought into final prominence in December by the white snow which embeds it. The delicate flakes collapse and fall back around it, but retain their inexorable hold. Thus delicate is the action of nature, — a finger of air and a grasp of iron.

We pass the old red foundry, banked in with snow and its low eaves draped with icicles, and come to the brook which turns its resounding wheel. The musical motion of the water seems almost unnatural amidst the general stillness: brooks, like men, must keep themselves warm by exercise. The overhanging rushes and al-

der sprays, weary of winter's sameness, have made for themselves playthings, — each dangling a crystal knob of ice, which sways gently in the water and gleams ruddy in the sunlight. As we approach the foaming cascade, the toys become larger and more glittering, movable stalactites, which the water tosses merrily upon their flexible stems. The torrent pours down beneath an enamelled mask of ice, wreathed and convoluted like the human brain, and sparkling with gorgeous glow. Tremulous motions and glimmerings go through the translucent veil, as if it throbbed with the throbbing wave beneath. It holds in its mazes stray bits of color, — scarlet berries, evergreen sprigs, blue raspberry stems, and sprays of yellow willow; glittering necklaces and wreaths and tiaras of brilliant ice-work cling and trail around its edges, and no regal palace shines with such carcanets of jewels as this winter ball-room of the dancing drops.

Above, the brook becomes a smooth black canal between two steep white banks; and the glassy water seems momentarily stiffening into the solider blackness of ice. Here and there thin films are already formed over it, and are being constantly broken apart by the treacherous current; a flake a foot square is jerked away and goes sliding beneath the slight trans-

parent surface till it reappears below. The same thing, on a larger scale, helps to form the mighty icepack of the Northern seas. Nothing except ice is capable of combining, on the largest scale, bulk with mobility, and this imparts a dignity to its motions even on the smallest scale. I do not believe that anything in Behring's Straits could impress me with a grander sense of desolation or of power, than when in boyhood I watched the ice break up in the winding channel of Charles River.

Amidst so much that seems like death, let us turn and study the life. There is much more to be seen in winter than most of us have ever noticed. Far in the North the "moose-yards" are crowded and trampled, at this season, and the wolf and the deer run noiselessly a deadly race, as I have heard the hunters describe, upon the white surface of the gleaming lake. But the pond beneath our feet keeps its stores of life chiefly below its level platform, as the bright fishes in the basket of yon heavy-booted fisherman can tell. Yet the scattered tracks of mink and muskrat beside the banks, of meadow mice around the haystacks, of squirrels under the trees, of rabbits and partridges in the wood, show the warm life that is beating unseen, beneath fur or feathers, close beside us. The chickadees are chattering merrily in the upland

grove, the blue jays scream in the hemlock glade, the snowbird mates the snow with its whiteness, and the robin contrasts with it his still ruddy breast. The weird and impenetrable crows, most talkative of birds and most uncommunicative, their very food at this season a mystery, are almost as numerous now as in summer. They always seem like some race of banished goblins, doing penance for some primeval and inscrutable transgression, and if any bird can have a history it is they. In the Spanish version of the tradition of King Arthur, it is said that he fled from the weeping queens and the island valley of Avilion in the form of a crow; and hence it is said in "Don Quixote" that no Englishman will ever kill one.

The traces of the insects in the winter are prophetic, — from the delicate cocoon of some infinitesimal feathery thing which hangs upon the dry, starry calyx of the aster, to the large brown paper parcel which hides in peasant garb the costly beauty of some gorgeous moth; but the hints of birds are retrospective. In each tree of this pasture, the very pasture where last spring we looked for nests and found them not among the deceitful foliage, the fragile domiciles now stand revealed. But where are the birds that filled them? Could

the airy creatures nurtured in those nests have left permanently traced upon the air behind them their own bright summer flight, the whole atmosphere would be filled with interlacing lines and curves of gorgeous coloring, the centre of all being this forsaken bird's nest filled with snow.

Among the many birds which winter here, and the many insects which are called forth by a few days of thaw, not a few must die of cold or of fatigue amid the storms. Yet how few traces one sees of this mortality! Yonder a dead wasp has fallen on the snow, and the warmth of its body, or its power of reflecting a few small rays of light, is melting its little grave beneath it. With what a cleanly purity does Nature strive to withdraw all unsightly objects into her cemetery! Their own weight and lingering warmth take them through air or water, snow or ice, to the level of the earth, and there with spring comes an army of burying-insects, *Necrophagi*, in a livery of red and black, to dig a grave beneath every one, and not a sparrow falleth to the ground without knowledge. The tiny remains thus disappear from the surface, and the dry leaves are soon spread above these Children in the Wood.

Thus varied and benignant are the aspects of winter on these sunny days. But it is impos-

sible to claim this weather as the only type of our winter climate. There occasionally come days which, though perfectly still and serene, suggest more terror than any tempest, — terrible, clear, glaring days of pitiless cold, — when the sun seems powerless or only a brighter moon, when the windows remain ground glass at high noontide, and when, on going out of doors, one is dazzled by the brightness, and fancies for a moment that it cannot be so cold as has been reported, but presently discovers that the severity is only more deadly for being so still. Exercise on such days seems to produce no warmth ; one's limbs appear ready to break on any sudden motion, like icy boughs. Stage-drivers and draymen are transformed to mere human buffaloes by their fur coats ; the patient oxen are frost-covered ; the horse that goes racing by waves a wreath of steam from his tossing head. On such days life becomes a battle to all householders, the ordinary apparatus for defence is insufficient, and the price of caloric is continual vigilance. In innumerable armies the frost besieges the portal, creeps in beneath it and above it, and on every latch and key-handle lodges an advanced guard of white rime. Leave the door ajar never so slightly, and a chill creeps in cat-like ; we are conscious by the warmest fireside of the near

vicinity of cold, its fingers are feeling after us, and even if they do not clutch us, we know that they are there. The sensations of such days almost make us associate their clearness and whiteness with something malignant and evil. Charles Lamb asserts of snow, "It glares too much for an innocent color, methinks." Why does popular mythology associate the infernal regions with a high temperature instead of a low one? El Aishi, the Arab writer, says of the bleak wind of the Desert (so writes Richardson, the African traveller), "The north wind blows with an intensity equalling the cold of hell; language fails me to describe its rigorous temperature." Some have thought that there is a similar allusion in the phrase "weeping and gnashing of teeth," — the teeth chattering from frost. Milton also enumerates cold as one of the torments of the lost, —

> "O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp;"

and one may sup full of horrors on the exceedingly cold collation provided for the next world by the Norse Edda.

But after all, there are but few such terrific periods in our Massachusetts winters, and the appointed exit from their frigidity is usually through a snowstorm. After a day of this severe sunshine there comes commonly a darker day of cloud, still hard and forbidding, though

milder in promise, with a sky of lead, deepening near the horizon into darker films of iron. Then, while all the nerves of the universe seem rigid and tense, the first reluctant flake steals slowly down, like a tear. In a few hours the whole atmosphere begins to relax once more, and in our astonishing climate very possibly the snow changes to rain in twenty-four hours, and a thaw sets in. It is not strange, therefore, that snow, which to Southern races is typical of cold and terror, brings associations of warmth and shelter to the children of the North.

Snow, indeed, actually nourishes animal life. It holds in its bosom numerous animalcules: you may have a glass of water, perfectly free from *infusoria*, which yet, after your dissolving in it a handful of snow, will show itself full of microscopic creatures, shrimp-like and swift; and the famous red snow of the Arctic regions is only an exhibition of the same property. It has sometimes been fancied that persons buried under the snow have received sustenance through the pores of the skin, like reptiles embedded in rock. Elizabeth Woodcock lived eight days beneath a snowdrift, in 1799, without eating a morsel; and a Swiss family were buried beneath an avalanche, in a manger, for five months, in 1755, with no food but a trifling store of chestnuts and a small daily supply of

milk from a goat which was buried with them. In neither case was there extreme suffering from cold, and it is unquestionable that the interior of a drift is far warmer than the surface.

The process of crystallization seems a microcosm of the universe. Radiata, mollusca, feathers, flowers, ferns, mosses, palms, pines, grain-fields, leaves of cedar, chestnut, elm, acanthus: these and multitudes of other objects are figured on your frosty window; on sixteen different panes I have counted sixteen patterns strikingly distinct, and it appeared like a showcase for the globe. What can seem remoter relatives than the star, the starfish, the starflower, and the starry snowflake which clings this moment to your sleeve? — yet some philosophers hold that one day their law of existence will be found precisely the same. The connection with the primeval star, especially, seems far and fanciful enough, but there are yet unexplored affinities between light and crystallization: some crystals have a tendency to grow toward the light, and others develop electricity and give out flashes of light during their formation. Slight foundations for scientific fancies, indeed, but slight is all our knowledge.

More than a hundred different figures of snowflakes, all regular and kaleidoscopic, have been drawn by Scoresby, Lowe, and Glaisher,

and may be found pictured in the encyclopædias and elsewhere, ranging from the simplest stellar shapes to the most complicated ramifications. Professor Tyndall, in his delightful book on "The Glaciers of the Alps," gives drawings of a few of these snow blossoms, which he watched falling for hours, the whole air being filled with them, and drifts of several inches being accumulated while he watched. "Let us imagine the eye gifted with microscopic power sufficient to enable it to see the molecules which composed these starry crystals; to observe the solid nucleus formed and floating in the air; to see it drawing towards it its allied atoms, and these arranging themselves as if they moved to music, and ended with rendering that music concrete." Thus do the Alpine winds, like Orpheus, build their walls by harmony.

In some of these frost flowers the rare and delicate blossom of our wild *Mitella diphylla* is beautifully figured. Snowflakes have been also found in the form of regular hexagons and other plane figures, as well as in cylinders and spheres. As a general rule, the intenser the cold the more perfect the formation, and the most perfect specimens are Arctic or Alpine in their locality. In this climate the snow seldom falls when the mercury is much below zero;

but the slightest atmospheric changes may alter the whole condition of the deposit, and decide whether it shall sparkle like Italian marble, or be dead-white like the statuary marble of Vermont, — whether it shall be a fine powder which can sift through wherever dust can, or descend in large woolly masses, tossed like mouthfuls to the hungry earth.

The most remarkable display of crystallization which I have ever seen was on the 13th of January, 1859. There had been three days of unusual cold, but during the night the weather had moderated, and the mercury in the morning stood at +14°. About two inches of snow had fallen, and the trees appeared densely coated with it. It proved, on examination, that every twig had on the leeward side a dense row of miniature fronds or fern-leaves executed in snow, with a sharply defined central nerve, or midrib, and perfect ramification, tapering to a point, and varying in length from half an inch to three inches. On every post, every rail, and the corners of every building, the same spectacle was seen; and where the snow had accumulated in deep drifts, it was still made up of the ruins of these fairy structures. The white, enamelled landscape was beautiful, but a close view of the details was far more so. The crystallizations were somewhat uniform in struc-

ture, yet suggested a variety of natural objects, as feather-mosses, birds' feathers, and the most delicate lace-corals, but the predominant analogy was with ferns. Yet they seemed to assume a sort of fantastic kindred with the objects to which they adhered: thus, on the leaves of spruce-trees and on delicate lichens they looked like reduplications of the original growth, and they made the broad, flat leaves of the arbor-vitæ fully twice as wide as before. But this fringe was always on one side only, except when gathered upon dangling fragments of spider's web or bits of stray thread: these they entirely encircled, probably because these objects had twirled in the light wind while the crystals were forming. Singular disguises were produced: a bit of ragged rope appeared a piece of twisted lace-work; a knot-hole in a board was adorned with a deep antechamber of snowy wreaths; and the frozen body of a hairy caterpillar became its own well-plumed hearse. The most peculiar circumstance was the fact that single flakes never showed any regular crystallization: the magic was in the combination; the under sides of rails and boards exhibited it as unequivocally as the upper sides, indicating that the phenomenon was created in the lower atmosphere, and was more akin to frost than snow; and yet the largest snow-banks

were composed of nothing else, and seemed like heaps of blanched iron filings.

Interesting observations have been made on the relations between ice and snow. The difference seems to lie only in the more or less compacted arrangement of the frozen particles. Water and air, each being transparent when separate, become opaque when intimately mingled, the reason being that the inequalities of refraction break up and scatter every ray of light. Thus, clouds cast a shadow; so does steam; so does foam: and the same elements take a still denser texture when combined as snow. Every snowflake is permeated with minute airy chambers, among which the light is bewildered and lost; while from perfectly hard and transparent ice every trace of air disappears, and the transmission of light is unbroken. Yet that same ice becomes white and opaque when pulverized, its fragments being then intermingled with air again, — just as colorless glass may be crushed into white powder. On the other hand, Professor Tyndall has converted slabs of snow to ice by pressure, and has shown that every glacier begins as a snowdrift at its summit, and ends in a transparent ice cavern below. "The blue blocks which span the sources of the Arveiron were once powdery snow upon the slopes of the Col du Géant."

The varied and wonderful shapes assumed by snow and ice have been best portrayed, perhaps, by Dr. Kane in his two works; but their resources of color have been so explored by no one as by this same favored Professor Tyndall, among his Alps. It appears that the tints which in temperate regions are seen feebly and occasionally, in hollows or angles of fresh drifts, become brilliant and constant above the line of perpetual snow, and the higher the altitude the more lustrous the display. When a staff was struck into the new-fallen drift, the hollow seemed instantly to fill with a soft blue liquid, while the snow adhering to the staff took a complementary color of pinkish yellow, and on moving it up and down it was hard to resist the impression that a pink flame was rising and sinking in the hole. The little natural furrows in the drifts appeared faintly blue, the ridges were gray, while the parts most exposed to view seemed least illuminated, and as if a light brown dust had been sprinkled over them. The fresher the snow, the more marked the colors, and it made no difference whether the sky were cloudless or foggy. Thus was every white peak decked upon its brow with this tiara of ineffable beauty.

The impression is very general that the average quantity of snow has greatly diminished

in America; but it must be remembered that very severe storms occur only at considerable intervals, and the Puritans did not always, as boys fancy, step out of the upper windows upon the snow. In 1717 the ground was covered from ten to twenty feet, indeed; but during January, 1861, the snow was six feet on a level in many parts of Maine and New Hampshire, and was probably drifted three times that depth in particular spots. The greatest storm recorded in England, I believe, is that of 1814, in which for forty-eight hours the snow fell so furiously that drifts of sixteen, twenty, and even twenty-four feet were recorded in various places. An inch an hour is thought to be the average rate of deposit, though four inches are said to have fallen during the severe storm of January 3, 1859. When thus intensified, the "beautiful meteor of the snow" begins to give a sensation of something formidable; and when the mercury suddenly falls meanwhile, and the wind rises, there are sometimes suggestions of such terror in a snowstorm as no summer thunders can rival. The brief and singular tempest of February 7, 1861, was a thing to be forever remembered by those who saw it (as I did) over a wide plain. The sky suddenly appeared to open and let down whole solid snow-banks at once, which were caught and

torn to pieces by the ravenous winds, and the traveller was instantaneously enveloped in a whirling mass far denser than any fog; it was a tornado with snow stirred into it. Standing in the middle of the road, with houses close on every side, one could see absolutely nothing in any direction; one could hear no sound but the storm. Every landmark vanished; it was no more possible to guess the points of the compass than in mid-ocean; and it was easy to conceive of being bewildered and overwhelmed within a rod of one's own door. The tempest lasted only an hour; but if it had lasted a week, we should have had such a storm as occurred on the steppes of Kirgheez in Siberia, in 1827, destroying two hundred and eighty thousand five hundred horses, thirty thousand four hundred cattle, a million sheep, and ten thousand camels, — or as "the thirteen drifty days," in 1620, which killed nine tenths of all the sheep in the South of Scotland. On Eskdale Moor, out of twenty thousand only forty-five were left alive, and the shepherds everywhere built up huge semicircular walls of the dead creatures, to afford shelter to the living, till the gale should end. But the most remarkable narrative of a snowstorm which I have ever seen was that written by Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, in record of one which took place January 24, 1790.

James Hogg at this time belonged to a sort of literary society of young shepherds, and had set out, the day previous, to walk twenty miles over the hills to the place of meeting; but so formidable was the look of the sky that he felt anxious for his sheep, and finally turned back again. There was at that time only a slight fall of snow, in thin flakes which seemed uncertain whether to go up or down; the hills were covered with deep folds of frost-fog, and in the valleys the same fog seemed dark, dense, and as it were crushed together. An old shepherd, predicting a storm, bade him watch for a sudden opening through this fog, and expect a wind from that quarter; yet when he saw such an opening suddenly form at midnight (having then reached his own home), he thought it all a delusion, for the weather had grown milder and a thaw seemed setting in. He therefore went to bed, and felt no more anxiety for his sheep; yet he lay awake in spite of himself, and at two o'clock he heard the storm begin. It smote the house suddenly, like a great peal of thunder, — something utterly unlike any storm he had ever before heard. On his rising and thrusting his bare arm through a hole in the roof, it seemed precisely as if he had thrust it into a snow-bank, so densely was the air filled with falling and driving particles. He lay still for an hour,

while the house rocked with the tempest, hoping it might prove only a hurricane; but as there was no abatement, he wakened his companion shepherd, telling him "it was come on such a night or morning as never blew from the heavens." The other at once arose, and, opening the door of the shed where they slept, found a drift as high as the farmhouse already heaped between them and its walls, a distance of only fourteen yards. He floundered through, Hogg soon following, and, finding all the family up, they agreed that they must reach the sheep as soon as possible, especially eight hundred ewes that were in one lot together, at the farthest end of the farm. So after family prayers and breakfast, four of them stuffed their pockets with bread and cheese, sewed their plaids about them, tied down their hats, and, taking each his staff, set out on their tremendous undertaking, two hours before day.

Day dawned before they got three hundred yards from the house. They could not see each other, and kept together with the greatest difficulty. They had to make paths with their staves, rolled themselves over drifts otherwise impassable, and every three or four minutes had to hold their heads down between their knees to recover breath. They went in single file, taking the lead by turns. The master

soon gave out, and was speechless and semi-conscious for more than an hour, though he afterwards recovered and held out with the rest. Two of them lost their head-gear, and Hogg himself fell over a high precipice; but they reached the flock at half past ten. They found the ewes huddled together in a dense body, under ten feet of snow, — packed so closely, that, to the amazement of the shepherds, when they had extricated the first, the whole flock walked out one after another, in a body, through the hole.

How they got them home it is almost impossible to tell. It was now noon, and they sometimes could see through the storm for twenty yards, but they had only one momentary glimpse of the hills through all that terrible day. Yet Hogg persisted in going by himself afterwards to rescue some flocks of his own, barely escaping with life from the expedition; his eyes were sealed up with the storm, and he crossed a formidable torrent, without knowing it, on a wreath of snow. Two of the others lost themselves in a deep valley, and would have perished but for being accidentally heard by a neighboring shepherd, who guided them home, where the female portion of the family had abandoned all hope of ever seeing them again.

The next day was clear, with a cold wind,

and they set forth again at daybreak to seek the remainder of the flock. The face of the country was perfectly transformed: not a hill was the same, not a brook or lake could be recognized. Deep glens were filled in with snow, covering the very tops of the trees; and over a hundred acres of ground, under an average depth of six or eight feet, they were to look for four or five hundred sheep. The attempt would have been hopeless but for a dog that accompanied them. Seeing their perplexity, he began snuffing about, and presently scratched in the snow at a certain point, then looked round at his master. And on digging at this spot they found a sheep beneath. And so the dog led them all day, bounding eagerly from one place to another, much faster than they could dig the creatures out, so that he sometimes had twenty or thirty holes marked beforehand. In this way, within a week, they got out every sheep on the farm except four, these last being buried under a mountain of snow fifty feet deep, on the top of which the dog had marked their places again and again. In every case the sheep proved to be alive and warm, though half suffocated; on being taken out, they usually bounded away swiftly, and then fell helplessly in a few moments, overcome by the change of atmosphere; some then died almost instantly,

and others were carried home and with difficulty preserved, only about sixty being lost in all. Marvellous to tell, the country people unanimously agreed afterwards to refer the whole terrific storm to some secret incantations of poor Hogg's literary society; it was generally maintained that a club of young dare-devils had raised the Fiend himself among them in the likeness of a black dog, the night preceding the storm; and the young students actually did not dare to show themselves at fairs or at markets for a year afterwards.

Snow scenes less exciting, but more wild and dreary, may be found in Alexander Henry's Travels with the Indians, more than a century ago. In the winter of 1776, for instance, they wandered for many hundred miles over the farthest northwestern prairies, where scarcely a white man had before trodden. The snow lay from four to six feet deep, and they went on snowshoes, drawing their stores on sleds. The mercury was sometimes —32°; no fire could keep them warm at night, and often they had no fire, being scarcely able to find wood enough to melt the snow for drink. They lay beneath buffalo-skins and the stripped bark of trees: a foot of snow sometimes fell on them before morning. The sun rose at half past nine and set at half past two. "The country was one uninterrupted

plain, in many parts of which no wood, nor even the smallest shrub, was to be seen: a frozen sea, of which the little coppices were the islands. That behind which we had encamped the night before soon sank in the horizon, and the eye had nothing left save only the sky and snow." Fancy them encamped by night, seeking shelter in a scanty grove from a wild tempest of snow; then suddenly charged upon by a herd of buffaloes, thronging in from all sides of the wood to take shelter likewise, — the dogs barking, the Indians firing, and still the bewildered beasts rushing madly in, blinded by the storm, fearing the guns within less than the fury without, crashing through the trees, trampling over the tents, and falling about in the deep and dreary snow! No other writer has ever given us the full desolation of Indian winter life. Whole families, Henry said, frequently perished together in such storms. No wonder that the aboriginal legends are full of "mighty Peboan, the Winter," and of Kabibonokka in his lodge of snowdrifts.

The interest inspired by these simple narratives suggests the reflection that literature, which has thus far portrayed so few aspects of external nature, has described almost nothing of winter beauty. In English books, especially, this season is simply forlorn and disagreeable, dark and dismal.

"And foul and fierce
All winter drives along the darkened air."

"When dark December shrouds the transient day,
And stormy winds are howling in their ire,
Why com'st not thou? . . . Oh, haste to pay
The cordial visit sullen hours require!"

"Winter will oft at eve resume the breeze,
Chill the pale morn, and bid his driving blasts
Deform the day delightless."

"Now that the fields are dank and ways are mire,
With whom you might converse, and by the fire
Help waste the sullen day."

But our prevalent association with winter, in the northern United States, is with something white and dazzling and brilliant; and it is time to paint our own pictures, and cease to borrow these gloomy alien tints. One must turn eagerly every season to the few glimpses of American winter aspects: to Emerson's "Snow-storm," every word a sculpture; to the admirable storm in "Margaret;" to Thoreau's "Winter Walk," in the "Dial;" and to Lowell's "First Snowflake." These are fresh and real pictures, which carry us back to the Greek Anthology, where the herds come wandering down from the wooded mountains, covered with snow, and to Homer's aged Ulysses, his wise words falling like the snows of winter.

Let me add to this scanty gallery of snow

pictures the quaint lore contained in one of the multitudinous sermons of Increase Mather, printed in 1704, entitled "A Brief Discourse concerning the Prayse due to God for His Mercy in giving Snow like Wool." One can fancy the delight of the oppressed Puritan boys in the days of the nineteenthlies, driven to the place of worship by the tithingmen, and cooped up on the pulpit and gallery stairs under charge of the constables, at hearing for once a discourse which they could understand, — snowballing spiritualized. This was not one of Emerson's terrible examples, — "the storm real, and the preacher only phenomenal;" but this setting of snowdrifts, which in our winters lends such grace to every stern rock and rugged tree, throws a charm even around the grim theology of the Mathers. Three main propositions, seven subdivisions, four applications, and four uses, but the wreaths and the gracefulness are cast about them all, while the wonderful commonplace books of those days, which held everything, had accumulated scraps of winter learning which cannot be spared from these less abstruse pages.

Beginning first at the foundation, the preacher must prove, "Prop. I. *That the Snow is fitly resembled to Wool.* Snow like Wool, sayes the Psalmist. And not only the Sacred Writers,

but others make use of this Comparison. The Grecians of old were wont to call the Snow ERIODES HUDOR, *Wooly Water*, or wet Wool. The Latin word *Floccus* signifies both a Lock of Wool and a Flake of Snow, in that they resemble one another. The aptness of the similitude appears in three things." "1. In respect of the Whiteness thereof." "2. In respect of Softness." "3. In respect of that Warming Vertue that does attend the Snow." [Here the reasoning must not be omitted.] "Wool is warm. We say, *As warm as Wool.* Woolen-cloth has a greater warmth than other Cloathing has. The wool on Sheep keeps them warm in the Winter season. So when the back of the Ground is covered with Snow, it keeps it warm. Some mention it as one of the wonders of the Snow, that tho' it is itself cold, yet it makes the Earth warm. But Naturalists observe that there is a saline spirit in it, which is hot, by means whereof Plants under the Snow are kept from freezing. Ice under the Snow is sooner melted and broken than other Ice. In some Northern Climates, the wild barbarous People use to cover themselves over with it to keep them warm. When the sharp Air has begun to freeze a man's Limbs, Snow will bring heat into them again. If persons Eat much Snow, or drink immoderately of Snow-water,

it will burn their Bowels and make them black. So that it has a warming vertue in it, and is therefore fitly compared to Wool."

Snow has many merits. "In *Lapland*, where there is little or no light of the sun in the depth of Winter, there are great Snows continually on the ground, and by the Light of that they are able to Travel from one place to another. . . . At this day in some hot Countreys, they have their Snow-cellars, where it is kept in Summer, and if moderately used, is known to be both refreshing and healthful. There are also Medicinal Vertues in the snow. A late Learned Physician has found that a *Salt* extracted out of snow is a sovereign Remedy against both putrid and pestilential Feavors. Therefore Men should Praise God, who giveth Snow like Wool." But there is an account against the snow, also. "Not only the disease called *Bulimia*, but others more fatal have come out of the Snow. *Geographers* give us to understand that in some Countries Vapours from the Snow have killed multitudes in less than a Quarter of an Hour. Sometimes both Men and Beasts have been destroyed thereby. Writers speak of no less than Forty Thousand men killed by a great Snow in one Day."

It gives a touching sense of human sympathy, to find that we may look at Orion and the Plei-

ades through the grave eyes of a Puritan divine. "The *Seven Stars* are the Summer Constellation; they bring on the spring and summer; and *Orion* is a Winter Constellation, which is attended with snow and cold, as at this Day. . . . Moreover, Late *Philosophers* by the help of the *Microscope* have observed the wonderful Wisdom of God in the Figure of the Snow; each flake is usually of a *Stellate* Form, and of six Angles of exact equal length from the Center. It is *like a little Star.* A great man speaks of it with admiration, that in a Body so familiar as the Snow is, no Philosopher should for many Ages take notice of a thing so obvious as the Figure of it. The learned *Kepler*, who lived in this last Age, is acknowledged to be the first that acquainted the world with the Sexangular Figure of the Snow."

Then come the devout applications. "There is not a Flake of Snow that falls on the Ground without the hand of God, Mat. 10. 29. 30. Not a Sparrow falls to the Ground, without the Will of your Heavenly Father, all the Hairs of your head are numbred. So the Great God has numbred all the Flakes of Snow that covers the Earth. Altho' no man can number them, that God that tells the number of the Stars has numbred them all. . . . We often see it, when the Ground is bare, if God speaks the word, the

Earth is covered with snow in a few Minutes' time. Here is the power of the Great God. If all the Princes and Great Ones of the Earth should send their Commands to the Clouds, not a Flake of snow would come from thence."

Then follow the "uses," at last, — the little boys in the congregation having grown uneasy long since, at hearing so much theorizing about snowdrifts, with so little opportunity of personal practice. "Use I. If we should Praise God for His giving Snow, surely then we ought to Praise Him for Spiritual Blessings much more." "Use II. We should Humble our selves under the Hand of God, when Snow in the season of it is witheld from us." "Use III. Hence all Atheists will be left Eternally Inexcusable." "Use IV. We should hence Learn to make a Spiritual Improvement of the Snow." And then with a closing volley of every text which figures under the head of "Snow" in the Concordance, the discourse comes to an end; and every liberated urchin goes home with his head full of devout fancies of building a snow-fort, after sunset, from which to propel consecrated missiles against imaginary or traditional Pequots.

And the patient reader, too long snow-bound, must be liberated also. After the winters of deepest drifts the spring often comes most sud-

denly; there is little frost in the ground, and the liberated waters, free without the expected freshet, are filtered into the earth, or climb on ladders of sunbeams to the sky. The beautiful crystals all melt away, and the places where they lay are silently made ready to be submerged in new drifts of summer verdure. These also will be transmuted in their turn, and so the eternal cycle of the season glides along.

Near my house there is a garden, beneath whose stately sycamores a fountain plays. Three sculptured girls lift forever upward a chalice which distils unceasingly a fine and plashing rain; in summer the spray holds the maidens in a glittering veil, but winter takes the radiant drops and slowly builds them up into a shroud of ice which creeps gradually about the three slight figures: the feet vanish, the waist is encircled, the head is covered, the piteous uplifted arms disappear, as if each were a Vestal Virgin entombed alive for her transgression. They vanishing entirely, the fountain yet plays on unseen; all winter the pile of ice grows larger, glittering organ-pipes of congelation add themselves outside, and by February a great glacier is formed, at whose buried centre stand immovable the patient girls. Spring comes at last, the fated prince, to free with glittering spear these enchanted beauties; the waning glacier,

slowly receding, lies conquered before their liberated feet; and still the fountain plays. Who can despair before the iciest human life, when its unconscious symbols are so beautiful?

VIII

FOOTPATHS

Who cares whither a footpath leads? The charm is in the path itself, its promise of something that the high-road cannot yield. Away from habitations, you know that the fisherman, the geologist, the botanist may have been there, or that the cows have been driven home, and that somewhere there are bars and a milk-pail. Even in the midst of houses the path suggests school-children with their luncheon baskets, or workmen seeking eagerly the noonday interval or the twilight rest. A footpath cannot be quite spoiled, so long as it remains such; you can make a road a mere avenue for fast horses or showy women, but this humbler track keeps its simplicity, and if a queen comes walking through it, she comes but as a village maid. A footpath has its own character, while that of the high-road is imposed upon it by those who dwell beside it or pass over it; indeed, roads become picturesque only when they are called lanes and make believe that they are but paths.

The very irregularity of a footpath makes

half its charm. So much of loitering and indolence and impulse have gone to its formation, that all which is stiff and military has been left out. I observed that the very dikes of the Southern rice plantations did not succeed in being rectilinear, though the general effect was that of Tennyson's "flowery squares." Even the country road, which is but an enlarged footpath, is never quite straight, as Thoreau long since observed, noting it with his surveyor's eye. I read in his unpublished diary: "The law that plants the rushes in waving lines along the edge of a pond, and that curves the pond shore itself, incessantly beats against the straight fences and highways of men, and makes them conform to the line of beauty at last." It is this unintentional adaptation that makes a footpath so indestructible. Instead of striking across the natural lines, it conforms to them, nestles into the hollow, skirts the precipice, avoids the morass. An unconscious landscape gardener, it seeks the most convenient course, never doubting that grace will follow. Mitchell, at his "Edgewood" farm, wishing to decide on the most picturesque avenue to his front door, ordered a heavy load of stone to be hauled across the field, and bade the driver seek the easiest grades, at whatever cost of curvature. The avenue followed the path so made.

When a footpath falls thus unobtrusively into its place, all natural forces seem to sympathize with it, and help it to fulfil its destiny. Once make a well-defined track through a wood, and presently the overflowing brooks seek it for a channel, the obstructed winds draw through it, the fox and woodchuck travel by it, the catbird and robin build near it, the bee and swallow make a high-road of its convenient thoroughfare. In winter the first snows mark it with a white line; as you wander through you hear the blue jay's cry, and see the hurrying flight of the sparrow; the graceful outlines of the leafless bushes are revealed, and the clinging bird's nests, "leaves that do not fall," give happy memories of summer homes. Thus nature meets man half way. The paths of the wild forest and of the rural neighborhood are not at all the same thing; indeed, a "spotted trail," marked only by the woodman's axe-strokes on the trees, is not a footpath. Thoreau, who is sometimes foolishly accused of having sought to be a mere savage, understood this distinction well. "A man changes by his presence," he says in his unpublished diary, "the very nature of the trees. The poet's is not a logger's path, but a woodman's, — the logger and pioneer have preceded him, and banished decaying wood and the spongy mosses which feed on it, and built

hearths and humanized nature for him. For a permanent residence there can be no comparison between this and the wilderness. Our woods are sylvan, and their inhabitants woodsmen and rustics ; that is, a *selvaggia* and its inhabitants *salvages*." What Thoreau loved, like all men of healthy minds, was the occasional experience of untamed wildness. "I love to see occasionally," he adds, "a man from whom the *usnea* (lichen) hangs as gracefully as from a spruce."

Footpaths bring us nearer both to nature and to man. No high-road, not even a lane, conducts to the deeper recesses of the wood, where you hear the wood thrush. There are a thousand concealed fitnesses in nature, rhymed correspondences of bird and blossom, for which you must seek through hidden paths ; as when you come upon some black brook so palisaded with cardinal flowers as to seem "a stream of sunsets ;" or trace its shadowy course till it spreads into some forest pool, above which that rare and patrician insect, the *Agrion* dragon-fly, flits and hovers perpetually, as if the darkness and the cool had taken wings. The dark brown pellucid water sleeps between banks of softest moss ; white stars of twin flowers creep close to the brink, delicate sprays of dewberry trail over it, and the emerald tips of drooping leaves

forever tantalize the still surface. Above these the slender, dark blue insect waves his dusky wings, like a liberated ripple of the brook, and takes the few stray sunbeams on his lustrous form. Whence came the correspondence between this beautiful shy creature and the moist, dark nooks, shot through with stray and transitory sunlight, where it dwells? The analogy is as unmistakable as that between the scorching heats of summer and the shrill cry of the cicada. They suggest questions that no *savant* can answer, mysteries that wait, like Goethe's secret of morphology, till a sufficient poet can be born. And we, meanwhile, stand helpless in their presence, as one waits beside the telegraphic wire, while it hums and vibrates, charged with all fascinating secrets, above the heads of a wondering world.

It is by the presence of pathways on the earth that we know it to be the habitation of man; in the barest desert, they open to us a common humanity. It is the absence of these that renders us so lonely on the ocean, and makes us glad to watch even the track of our own vessel. But on the mountain-top, how eagerly we trace out the "road that brings places together," as Schiller says. It is the first thing we look for; till we have found it, each scattered village has an isolated and churl-

ish look, but the glimpse of a furlong of road puts them all in friendly relations. The narrower the path, the more domestic and familiar it seems. The railroad may represent the capitalist or the government; the high-road indicates what the surveyor or the county commissioners thought best; but the footpath shows what the people needed. Its associations are with beauty and humble life, — the boy with his dog, the little girl with her fagots, the pedler with his pack; cheery companions they are or ought to be.

> "Jog on, jog on the footpath way,
> And merrily hent the stile-a:
> A merry heart goes all the day,
> Your sad one tires in a mile-a."

The footpath takes you across the farms and behind the houses; you are admitted to the family secrets and form a personal acquaintance. Even if you take the wrong path, it only leads you "across lots" to some man ploughing, or some old woman picking berries, — perhaps a very spicy acquaintance, whom the road would never have brought to light. If you are led astray in the woods, this only teaches you to observe landmarks more closely, or to leave straws and stakes for tokens, like a gypsy's *patteran*, to show the ways already traversed. There is a healthy vigor in the

mind of the boy who would like of all things to be lost in the woods, to build a fire out of doors, and sleep under a tree or in a haystack. Civilization is tiresome and enfeebling, unless we occasionally give it the relish of a little outlawry, and approach, in imagination at least, the zest of a gypsy life. The records of pedestrian journeys, the *Wanderjahre* and memoirs of good-for-nothings, and all the delightful German forest literature, — these belong to the footpath side of our nature. The passage I best remember in all Bayard Taylor's travels is the ecstasy of his Thüringian forester, who said: "I recall the time when just a sunny morning made me so happy that I did not know what to do with myself. One day in spring, as I went through the woods and saw the shadows of the young leaves upon the moss, and smelt the buds of the firs and larches, and thought to myself, 'All thy life is to be spent in the splendid forest,' I actually threw myself down and rolled in the grass like a dog, over and over, crazy with joy."

It is the charm of pedestrian journeys that they convert the grandest avenues to footpaths. Through them alone we gain intimate knowledge of the people, and of nature, and indeed of ourselves. It is easy to hurry too fast for our best reflections, which, as the old monk

said of perfection, must be sought not by flying, but by walking, "*Perfectionis via non pervolanda sed perambulanda.*" The thoughts that the railway affords us are dusty thoughts; we ask the news, read the journals, question our neighbor, and wish to know what is going on because we are a part of it. It is only in the footpath that our minds, like our bodies, move slowly, and we traverse thought, like space, with a patient thoroughness. Rousseau said that he had never experienced so much, lived so truly, and been so wholly himself, as during his travels on foot.

What can Hawthorne mean by saying in his English diary that "an American would never understand the passage in Bunyan about Christian and Hopeful going astray along a bypath into the grounds of Giant Despair, from there being no stiles and bypaths in our country"? So much of the charm of American pedestrianism lies in the bypaths! For instance, the whole interior of Cape Ann, beyond Gloucester, is a continuous woodland, with granite ledges everywhere cropping out, around which the high-road winds, following the curving and indented line of the sea, and dotted here and there with fishing hamlets. This whole interior is traversed by a network of footpaths, rarely passable for a wagon, and not always for a

horse, but enabling the pedestrian to go from any one of these villages to any other in a line almost direct, and always under an agreeable shade. By the longest of these hidden ways, one may go from Pigeon Cove to Gloucester, ten miles, without seeing a public road. In the little inn at the former village there used to hang an old map of this whole forest region, giving a chart of some of these paths, which were said to date back to the first settlement of the country. One of them, for instance, was called on the map "Old Road from Sandy Bay to Squam Meeting-house through the Woods;" but the road is now scarcely even a bridle-path, and the most faithful worshipper could not seek Squam Meeting-house in the family chaise. Those woods have been lately devastated; but when I first knew that region, it was as good as any German forest. Often we stepped almost from the edge of the sea into some gap in the woods; there seemed hardly more than a rabbit track, yet presently we met some wayfarer who had crossed the Cape by it. A piny dell gave some vista of the broad sea we were leaving, and an opening in the woods displayed another blue sea-line before; the encountering breezes interchanged odor of berry bush and scent of brine; penetrating farther among oaks and chestnuts, we come upon some little cot-

tage, quaint and sheltered as any Spenser drew; it was built on no high-road, and turned its vine-clad gable away from even the footpath. Then the ground rose and we were surprised by a breeze from a new quarter; perhaps we climbed trees to look for landmarks, and saw only, still farther in the woods, some great cliff of granite or the derrick of an unseen quarry. Three miles inland, as I remember, we found the hearthstones of a vanished settlement; then we passed a swamp with cardinal flowers; then a cathedral of noble pines, topped with crows' nests. If we had not gone astray by this time, we presently emerged on Dogtown Common, an elevated tableland, overspread with great boulders as with houses, and encircled with a girdle of green woods and an outer girdle of blue sea. I know of nothing more wild than that gray waste of boulders; it is a natural Salisbury Plain, of which icebergs and ocean currents were the Druidic builders; in that multitude of couchant monsters there seems a sense of suspended life; you feel as if they must speak and answer to each other in the silent nights, but by day only the wandering sea-birds seek them, on their way across the Cape, and the sweet-bay and green fern embed them in a softer and deeper setting as the years go by. This is the "height of ground" of that wild

footpath; but as you recede farther from the outer ocean and approach Gloucester, you come among still wilder ledges, unsafe without a guide, and you find in one place a cluster of deserted houses, too difficult of access to remove even their materials, so that they are left to moulder alone. I used to wander in those woods, summer after summer, till I had made my own chart of their devious tracks. And now when I close my eyes in this Oldport midsummer, the soft Italian air takes on something of a Scandinavian vigor; for the incessant roll of carriages I hear the tinkle of the quarryman's hammer and the veery's song; and I long for those perfumed and breezy pastures, and for those promontories of granite where the fresh water is nectar and the salt sea has a regal blue.

I recall another footpath near Worcester, Massachusetts; it leads up from the low meadows into the wildest region of all that vicinity, Tatesset Hill. Leaving behind you the open pastures where the cattle lie beneath the chestnut-trees or drink from the shallow brook, you pass among the birches and maples, where the woodsman's shanty stands in the clearing, and the raspberry fields are merry with children's voices. The familiar birds and butterflies linger below with them, and in the upper and

more sacred depths the wood thrush chants his litany and the brown mountain butterflies hover among the scented vines. Higher yet rises the "Rattlesnake Ledge," spreading over one side of the summit a black avalanche of broken rock, now overgrown with reindeer-moss and filled with tufts of the smaller wild geranium. Just below this ledge, — amid a dark, dense track of second-growth forest, masked here and there with grapevines, studded with rare orchises, and pierced by a brook that vanishes suddenly where the ground sinks away and lets the blue distance in, — there is a little monument to which the footpath leads, and which always seemed to me as wild a memorial of forgotten superstition as the traveller can find amid the forests of Japan.

It was erected by a man called Solomon Parsons, residing near Worcester, a quiet, thoughtful farmer, long-bearded, low-voiced, and with that aspect of refinement which an ideal life brings forth even in quite uninstructed men. At the height of the "Second Advent" excitement this man resolved to build for himself upon these remote rocks a house which should escape the wrath to come, and should even endure amid a burning and transformed earth. Thinking, as he had once said to me, that, "if the First Dispensation had been strong enough

to endure, there would have been no need of a Second," he resolved to build for his part something which should possess permanence at least. And there still remains on that high hillside the small beginning that he made.

There are four low stone walls, three feet thick, built solidly together without cement, and without the trace of tools. The end walls are nine feet high (the sides being lower), and are firmly united by a strong iron ridgepole, perhaps fifteen feet long, which is embedded at each end in the stone. Other masses of iron lie around unused, in sheets, bars, and coils, brought with slow labor by the builder from far below. The whole building was designed to be made of stone and iron. It is now covered with creeping vines and the débris of the hillside; but though its construction had been long discontinued when I saw it, the interior was still kept scrupulously clean through the care of this modern Solomon, who often visited his shrine.

An arch in the terminal wall admits the visitor to the small roofless temple, and he sees before him, embedded in the centre of the floor, a large smooth block of white marble, where the deed of this spot of land was to be recorded, in the hope to preserve it even after the globe should have been burned and renewed. But

not a stroke of this inscription was ever cut, and now the young chestnut boughs droop into the uncovered interior, and shy forest-birds sing fearlessly among them, having learned that this house belongs to God, not man.[1] As if to reassure them, and perhaps in allusion to his own vegetarian habits, the architect has spread some rough plaster at the head of the apartment and marked on it in bold characters, "Thou shalt not kill." Two slabs outside, a little way from the walls, bear these inscriptions, "Peace on Earth," "Good-Will to Men." When I visited it, the path was rough and so obstructed with bushes that it was hard to comprehend how it had afforded passage for these various materials; it seemed more as if some strange architectural boulder had drifted from some Runic period and been stranded there. It was as apt a confessional as any of Wordsworth's nooks among the Trosachs; and when one thinks how many men are wearing out their souls in trying to conform to the traditional mythologies of others, it seems nobler in this man to have reared upon that lonely hill the unfinished memorial of his own.

[1] Since this sketch was written, Solomon Parsons has died, having previously caused the deed to be carved on the stone, conveying the property to God. He tried several times, before his death, to have the inscription formally recorded at the registry of deeds.

I recall another path which leads from the Lower Saranac Lake, near "Martin's," to what the guides call, or used to call, "The Philosopher's Camp" at Amperzand. On this oddly named lake, in the Adirondack region, a tract of land was bought by Professor Agassiz and his friends, who made there a summer camping-ground, and with one comrade I once sought the spot. I remember with what joy we left the boat, — so delightful at first, so fatiguing at last; for I cannot, with Mr. Murray, call it a merit in the Adirondacks that you never have to walk, — and stepped away into the free forest. We passed tangled swamps, so dense with upturned trees and trailing mosses that they seemed to give no opening for any living thing to pass, unless it might be the soft and silent owl that turned its head almost to dislocation in watching us, ere it flitted vaguely away. Farther on, the deep, cool forest was luxurious with plumy ferns; we trod on moss-covered roots, finding the emerald steps so soft we scarcely knew that we were ascending; every breath was aromatic; there seemed infinite healing in every fragrant drop that fell upon our necks from the cedar boughs. We had what I think the pleasantest guide for a daylight tramp, — one who has never before passed over that particular route, and can only pilot you on gen-

eral principles till he gladly, at last, allows you to pilot him. When we once got the lead we took him jubilantly on, and beginning to look for "The Philosopher's Camp," found ourselves confronted by a large cedar-tree on the margin of a wooded lake. This was plainly the end of the path. Was the camp then afloat? Our escort was in that state of hopeless ignorance of which only lost guides are capable. We scanned the green horizon and the level water, without glimpse of human abode. It seemed an enchanted lake, and we looked about the tree trunk for some fairy horn, that we might blow it. That failing, we tried three rifle-shots, and out from the shadow of an island, on the instant, there glided a boat, which bore no lady of the lake, but a red-shirted woodsman. The artist whom we sought was on that very island, it seemed, sketching patiently while his guides were driving the deer.

This artist was he whose "Procession of the Pines" had identified his fame with that delightful forest region. He it was who had laid out with artistic taste "The Philosopher's Camp," and who was that season still awaiting philosophers as well as deer. He had been there for a month, alone with the guides, and declared that nature was pressing upon him to an extent that almost drove him wild. His eyes had a certain

remote and questioning look that belongs to imaginative men who dwell alone. It seemed an impertinence to ask him to come out of his dream and offer us dinner; but his instincts of hospitality failed not, and the red-shirted guide was sent to the camp, which was, it seemed, on the other side of the lake, to prepare our meal, while we bathed. I am thus particular in speaking of the dinner, not only because such is the custom of travellers, but also because it was the occasion of an interlude which I shall never forget. As we were undressing for our bath upon the lonely island, where the soft, pale water almost lapped our feet, and the deep, wooded hills made a great amphitheatre for the lake, our host bethought himself of something neglected in his instructions.

"Ben!" vociferated he to the guide, now rapidly receding. Ben paused on his oars.

"Remember to bo-o-oil the venison, Ben!" shouted the pensive artist, while all the slumbering echoes arose to applaud this culinary confidence.

"And, Ben!" he added imploringly, "don't forget the dumplings!" Upon this, the loons, all down the lake, who had hitherto been silent, took up the strain with vehemence, hurling their wild laughter at the presumptuous mortal who thus dared to invade their solitudes with

details as trivial as Mr. Pickwick's tomato sauce. They repeated it over and over to each other, till ten square miles of loons must have heard the news, and all laughed together; never was there such an audience; they could not get over it, and two hours after, when we had rowed over to the camp and dinner had been served, this irreverent and invisible chorus kept bursting out, at all points of the compass, with scattered chuckles of delight over this extraordinary bill of fare. Justice compels me to add that the dumplings were made of Indian meal, upon a recipe devised by our artist; the guests preferred the venison, but the host showed a fidelity to his invention that proved him to be indeed a dweller in an ideal world.

Another path that comes back to memory is the bare trail that we followed over the prairies of Nebraska, in 1856, when the Missouri River was held by roving bands from the Slave States, and Freedom had to seek an overland route into Kansas. All day and all night we rode between distant prairie fires, pillars of evening light and of morning cloud, while sometimes the low grass would burn to the very edge of the trail, so that we had to hold our breath as we galloped through. Parties of armed Missourians were sometimes seen over the prairie swells, so that we had to mount guard at nightfall; free-state emigrants,

fleeing from persecution, continually met us; and we sometimes saw parties of wandering Sioux, or passed their great irregular huts and houses of worship. I remember one desolate prairie summit on which an Indian boy sat motionless on horseback; his bare red legs clung closely to the white sides of his horse; a gorgeous sunset was unrolled behind him, and he might have seemed the last of his race, just departing for the hunting-grounds of the blest. More often the horizon showed no human outline, and the sun set cloudless, and elongated into pear-shaped outlines, as behind ocean waves. But I remember best the excitement that filled our breasts when we approached spots where the contest for a free soil had already been sealed with blood. In those days, as one went to Pennsylvania to study coal formations, or to Lake Superior for copper, so one went to Kansas for men. "Every footpath on this planet," said a rare thinker, "may lead to the door of a hero," and that trail into Kansas ended rightly at the tent door of John Brown.

And later, who that knew them can forget the picket-paths that were worn throughout the Sea Islands of South Carolina, — paths that wound along the shores of creeks or through the depths of woods, where the great wild roses tossed their airy festoons above your head, and

the brilliant lizards glanced across your track, and your horse's ears suddenly pointed forward and his pace grew uneasy as he snuffed the presence of something you could not see. At night you had often to ride from picket to picket in dense darkness, trusting to the horse to find his way, or sometimes dismounting to feel with your hands for the track, while the great Southern fireflies offered their floating lanterns for guidance, and the hoarse "Chuck-will's-widow" croaked ominously from the trees, and the great guns of the siege of Charleston throbbed more faintly than the drumming of a partridge, far away. Those islands are everywhere so intersected by dikes and ledges and winding creeks as to form a natural military region, like La Vendée; and yet two plantations that are twenty miles asunder by the road will sometimes be united by a footpath which a negro can traverse in two hours. These tracks are limited in distance by the island formation, but they assume a greater importance as you penetrate the mainland; they then join great States instead of mere plantations, and if you ask whither one of them leads, you are told "To Alabama," or "To Tennessee."

Time would fail to tell of that wandering path which leads to the Mine Mountain near Brattleborough, where you climb the high peak

at last, and perhaps see the showers come up the Connecticut till they patter on the leaves beneath you, and then, swerving, pass up the black ravine and leave you unwet. Or of those among the White Mountains, gorgeous with great red lilies which presently seem to take flight in a cloud of butterflies that match their tints, paths where the balsamic air caresses you in light breezes, and masses of alderberries rise above the waving ferns. Or of the paths that lead beside many a little New England stream, whose bank is lost to sight in a smooth green slope of grapevine: the lower shoots rest upon the quiet water, but the upper masses are crowned by a white wreath of alder blooms; beside them grow great masses of wild roses, and the simultaneous blossoms and berries of the gaudy nightshade. Or of those winding tracks that lead here and there among the flat stones of peaceful old graveyards, so entwined with grass and flowers that every spray of sweetbrier seems to tell more of life than all the accumulated epitaphs can tell of death.

And when the paths that one has personally traversed are exhausted, memory holds almost as clearly those which the poets have trodden for us, — those innumerable byways of Shakespeare, each more real than any high-road in England; or Chaucer's

"Little path I found
Of mintes full and fennell greene;"

or Spenser's

"Pathes and alleies wide
With footing worne;"

or the path of Browning's "Pippa,"

"Down the hillside, up the glen,
Love me as I love!"

or the haunted way in Sydney Dobell's ballad,

"Ravelstone, Ravelstone,
The merry path that leads
Down the golden morning hills,
And through the silver meads;"

or the few American paths that genius has yet idealized, — that where Hawthorne's David Swan slept, or that which Thoreau found upon the banks of Walden Pond, or where Whittier parted with his childhood's playmate on Ramoth Hill. It is not heights or depths or spaces that make the world worth living in; for the fairest landscape needs still to be garlanded by the imagination, — to become classic with noble deeds and romantic with dreams.

Go where we please in nature, we receive in proportion as we give. Ivo, the old Bishop of Chartres, wrote that "neither the secret depth of woods nor the tops of mountains make man blessed, if he has not with him solitude of

mind, the sabbath of the heart, and tranquillity of conscience." There are many roads, but one termination; and Plato says, in his "Republic," that the point where all paths meet is the soul's true resting-place and the journey's end.

IX

A SHADOW

I SHALL always remember one winter evening, a little before Christmas-time, when I took a long, solitary walk in the outskirts of the town. The cold sunset had left a trail of orange light along the horizon, the dry snow tinkled beneath my feet, and the early stars had a keen, clear lustre that matched well with the sharp sound and the frosty sensation. For some time I had walked toward the gleam of a distant window, and as I approached, the light showed more and more clearly through the white curtains of a little cottage by the road. I stopped, on reaching it, to enjoy the suggestion of domestic cheerfulness in contrast with the dark outside. I could not see the inmates, nor they me; but something of human sympathy came from that steadfast ray.

As I looked, a film of shade kept appearing and disappearing with rhythmic regularity in a corner of the window, as if some one might be sitting in a low rocking-chair close by. Presently the motion ceased, and suddenly across

the curtain came the shadow of a woman. She raised in her arms the shadow of a baby, and kissed it; then both disappeared, and I walked on.

What are Raphael's Madonnas but the shadow of a mother's love, so traced as to endure forever? In this picture of mine, the group actually moved upon the canvas. The curtains that hid it revealed it. The ecstasy of human love passed in brief, intangible panorama before me. It was something seen, yet unseen; airy, yet solid; a type, yet a reality; fugitive, yet destined to last in my memory while I live. It said more to me than would any Madonna of Raphael's, for his mother never kisses her child. I believe I have never passed over that road since then, never seen the house, never heard the names of its occupants. Their character, their history, their fate, are all unknown. But these two will always stand for me as disembodied types of humanity, — the Mother and the Child; they seem nearer to me than my immediate neighbors, yet they are as ideal and impersonal as the goddesses of Greece or as Plato's archetypal man.

I know not the parentage of that child, whether black or white, native or foreign, rich or poor. It makes no difference. The presence of a baby equalizes all social conditions.

On the floor of some Southern hut, scarcely so comfortable as a dog-kennel, I have seen a dusky woman look down upon her infant with such an expression of delight as painter never drew. No social culture can make a mother's face more than a mother's, as no wealth can make a nursery more than a place where children dwell. Lavish thousands of dollars on your baby-clothes, and after all the child is prettiest when every garment is laid aside. That bewitching nakedness, at least, may adorn the chubby darling of the poorest home.

I know not what triumph or despair may have come and gone through that wayside house since then, what jubilant guests may have entered, what lifeless form passed out. What anguish or what sin may have come between that woman and that child; through what worlds they now wander, and whether separate or in each other's arms, — this is all unknown. Fancy can picture other joys to which the first happiness was but the prelude, and, on the other hand, how easy to imagine some special heritage of human woe and call it theirs!

> "I thought of times when Pain might be thy guest,
> Lord of thy house and hospitality;
> And Grief, uneasy lover, might not rest
> Save when he sat within the touch of thee."

Nay, the foretaste of that changed fortune may have been present, even in the kiss. Who knows what absorbing emotion, besides love's immediate impulse, may have been uttered in that shadowy embrace? There may have been some contrition for ill-temper or neglect, or some triumph over ruinous temptation, or some pledge of immortal patience, or some heart-breaking prophecy of bereavement. It may have been simply an act of habitual tenderness, or it may have been the wild reaction toward a neglected duty; the renewed self-consecration of the saint, or the joy of the sinner that repenteth. No matter. She kissed the baby. The feeling of its soft flesh, the busy struggle of its little arms between her hands, the impatient pressure of its little feet against her knees, — these were the same, whatever the mood or circumstance beside. They did something to equalize joy and sorrow, honor and shame. Maternal love is love, whether a woman be a wife or only a mother. Only a mother!

The happiness beneath that roof may, perhaps, have never reached so high a point as at that precise moment of my passing. In the coarsest household, the mother of an infant is placed on a sort of pedestal of care and tenderness, at least for a time. She resumes some-

thing of the sacredness and dignity of the maiden. Coleridge ranks as the purest of human emotions that of a husband towards a wife who has a baby at her breast, — "a feeling how free from sensual desire, yet how different from friendship!" And to the true mother, however cultivated, or however ignorant, this period of early parentage is happier than all else, in spite of its exhausting cares. In that delightful book, the "Letters" of Mrs. Richard Trench, — mother of the well-known English writer, — the most agreeable passage is perhaps that in which, after looking back upon a life spent in the most brilliant society of Europe, she gives the palm of happiness to the time when she was a young mother. She writes to her god-daughter: "I believe it is the happiest time of any woman's life, who has affectionate feelings, and is blessed with healthy and well-disposed children. I know at least that neither the gayeties and boundless hopes of early life, nor the more grave pursuits and deeper affections of later years, are by any means comparable in my recollection with the serene, yet lively pleasure of seeing my children playing on the grass, enjoying their little temperate supper, or repeating 'with holy look' their simple prayers, and undressing for bed, growing prettier for every part of their

dress they took off, and at last lying down, all freshness and love, in complete happiness, and an amiable contest for mamma's last kiss."

That kiss welcomed the child into a world where joy predominates. The vast multitude of human beings enjoy existence and wish to live. They all have their earthly life under their own control. Some religions sanction suicide; the Christian Scriptures nowhere explicitly forbid it; and yet it is a rare thing. Many persons sigh for death when it seems far off, but the desire vanishes when the boat upsets, or the locomotive runs off the track, or the measles set in. A wise physician once said to me: "I observe that every one wishes to go to heaven, but I observe that most people are willing to take a great deal of very disagreeable medicine first." The lives that one least envies — as of the Digger Indian or the outcast boy in the city — are yet sweet to the living. "They have only a pleasure like that of the brutes," we say with scorn. But what a racy and substantial pleasure is that! The flashing speed of the swallow in the air, the cool play of the minnow in the water, the dance of twin butterflies round a thistle-blossom, the thundering gallop of the buffalo across the prairie, nay, the clumsy walk of the grizzly bear; it were doubtless enough to reward exist-

ence, could we have joy like such as these, and ask no more. This is the hearty physical basis of animated life, and as step by step the savage creeps up to the possession of intellectual manhood, each advance brings with it new sorrow and new joy, with the joy always in excess.

There are many who will utterly disavow this creed that life is desirable in itself. A fair woman in a ball-room, exquisitely dressed, and possessed of all that wealth could give, once declared to me her belief — and I think honestly — that no person over thirty was consciously happy, or would wish to live, but for the fear of death. There could not even be pleasure in contemplating one's children, she asserted, since they were living in such a world of sorrow. Asking the opinion, within half an hour, of another woman as fair and as favored by fortune, I found directly the opposite verdict. "For my part I can truly say," she answered, "that I enjoy every moment I live." The varieties of temperament and of physical condition will always afford us these extremes; but the truth lies between them, and most persons will endure many sorrows and still find life sweet.

And the mother's kiss welcomes the child into a world where good predominates as well

as joy. What recreants must we be, in an age that has abolished slavery in America and popularized the governments of all Europe, if we doubt that the tendency of man is upward! How much that the world calls selfishness is only generosity with narrow walls, — a too exclusive solicitude to maintain a wife in luxury or make one's children rich! In an audience of rough people a generous sentiment always brings down the house. In the tumult of war both sides applaud an heroic deed. A courageous woman, who had traversed alone, on benevolent errands, the worst parts of New York, told me that she never felt afraid except in the solitudes of the country; wherever there was a crowd, she found a protector. A policeman of great experience once spoke to me with admiration of the fidelity of professional thieves to each other, and the risks they would run for the women whom they loved; when "Bristol Bill" was arrested, he said, there was found upon the burglar a set of false keys, not quite finished, by which he would certainly, within twenty-four hours, have had his mistress out of jail. Parent-Duchatelet found always the remains of modesty among the fallen women of Paris hospitals; and Mayhew, amid the London outcasts, says that he thinks better of human nature every day. Even among politi-

cians, whom it is our American fashion to revile as the chief of sinners, there is perhaps less of evil than of good. In Wilberforce's "Memoirs" there is an account of his having once asked Mr. Pitt whether his long experience as Prime Minister had made him think well or ill of his fellow men. Mr. Pitt answered, "Well;" and his successor, Lord Melbourne, being asked the same question, answered, after a little reflection, "My opinion is the same as that of Mr. Pitt."

Let us have faith. It was a part of the vigor of the old Hebrew tradition to rejoice when a man-child was born into the world; and the maturer strength of nobler ages should rejoice over a woman-child as well. Nothing human is wholly sad, until it is effete and dying out. Where there is life there is promise. "Vitality is always hopeful," was the verdict of the most refined and clear-sighted woman who has yet explored the rough mining villages of the Rocky Mountains. There is apt to be a certain coarse virtue in rude health; as the Germanic races were purest when least civilized, and our American Indians did not unlearn chastity till they began to decay. But even where vigor and vice are found together, they still may hold a promise for the next generation. Out of the strong cometh forth sweetness. Parisian wick-

edness is not so discouraging merely because it is wicked, as from a suspicion that it is draining the life-blood of the nation. A mob of miners or of New York bullies may be uncomfortable neighbors, and may make a man of refinement hesitate whether to stop his ears or to feel for his revolver; but they hold more promise for the coming generations than the line which ends in Madame Bovary or the Vicomte de Camors.

But behind that cottage curtain, at any rate, a new and prophetic life had begun. I cannot foretell that child's future, but I know something of its past. The boy may grow up into a criminal, the woman into an outcast, yet the baby was beloved. It came "not in utter nakedness." It found itself heir of the two prime essentials of existence, — life and love. Its first possession was a woman's kiss; and in that heritage the most important need of its career was guaranteed. "An ounce of mother," says the Spanish proverb, "is worth a pound of clergy." Jean Paul says that in life every successive influence affects us less and less, so that the circumnavigator of the globe is less influenced by all the nations he has seen than by his nurse. Well may the child imbibe that reverence for motherhood which is the first need of man. Where woman is most a slave,

she is at least sacred to her son. The Turkish Sultan must prostrate himself at the door of his mother's apartments; and were he known to have insulted her, it would make his throne tremble. Among the savage African Touaricks, if two parents disagree, it is to the mother that the child's obedience belongs. Over the greater part of the earth's surface, the foremost figures in all temples are the Mother and Child. Christian and Buddhist nations, numbering together two thirds of the world's population, unite in this worship. Into the secrets of the ritual that baby in the window had already received initiation.

And how much spiritual influence may in turn have gone forth from that little one! The coarsest father gains a new impulse to labor from the moment of his baby's birth; he scarcely sees it when awake, and yet it is with him all the time. Every stroke he strikes is for his child. New social aims, new moral motives, come vaguely up to him. The London costermonger told Mayhew that he thought every man would like his son or daughter to have a better start in the world than his own. After all, there is no tonic like the affections. Philosophers express wonder that the divine laws should give to some young girl, almost a child, the custody of an immortal soul. But

what instruction the baby brings to the mother! She learns patience, self-control, endurance; her very arm grows strong, so that she can hold the dear burden longer than the father can. She learns to understand character, too, by dealing with it. "In training my first children," said a wise mother to me, "I thought that all were born just the same, and that I was wholly responsible for what they should become. I learned by degrees that each had a temperament of its own, which I must study before I could teach it." And thus, as the little ones grow older, their dawning instincts guide those of the parents; their questions suggest new answers, and to have loved them is a liberal education.

For the height of heights is love. The philosopher dries into a skeleton like that he investigates, unless love teaches him. He is blind among his microscopes, unless he sees in the humblest human soul a revelation that dwarfs all the world beside. While he grows gray in ignorance among his crucibles, every girlish mother is being illuminated by every kiss of her child. That house is so far sacred, which holds within its walls this new-born heir of eternity. But to dwell on these high mysteries would take us into depths beyond the present needs of mother or of infant, and it is better

that the greater part of the baby-life should be that of an animated toy.

Perhaps it is well for all of us that we should live mostly on the surfaces of things and should play with life, to avoid taking it too hard. In a nursery the youngest child is a little more than a doll, and the doll is a little less than a child. What spell does fancy weave on earth like that which the one of these small beings performs for the other? This battered and tattered doll, this shapeless, featureless, possibly legless creature, whose mission it is to be dragged by one arm, or stood upon its head in the bathing-tub, until it finally reverts to the rag-bag whence it came, — what an affluence of breathing life is thrown around it by one touch of dawning imagination! Its little mistress will find all joy unavailing without its sympathetic presence, will confide every emotion to its pen-and-ink ears, and will weep passionate tears if its extremely soiled person is pricked when its clothes are mended. What psychologist, what student of the human heart, has ever applied his subtile analysis to the emotions of a child toward her doll?

I read lately the charming autobiography of a little girl of eight years, written literally from her own dictation. Since "Pet Marjorie" I have seen no such actual self-revelation on the

part of a child. In the course of her narration she describes, with great precision and correctness, the travels of the family through Europe in the preceding year, assigning usually the place of importance to her doll, who appears simply as "My Baby." Nothing can be more grave, more accurate, more serious than the whole history, but nothing in it seems quite so real and alive as the doll. "When we got to Nice, I was sick. The next morning the doctor came, and he said I had something that was very much like scarlet fever. Then I had Annie take care of baby, and keep her away, for I was afraid she would get the fever. She used to cry to come to me, but I knew it would n't be good for her."

What firm judgment is here, what tenderness without weakness, what discreet motherhood! When Christmas came, it appears that baby hung up her stocking with the rest. Her devoted parent had bought for her a slate with a real pencil. Others provided thimble and scissors and bodkin and a spool of thread, and a travelling-shawl with a strap, and a cap with tarletan ruffles. "I found baby with the cap on, early in the morning, and she was so pleased she almost jumped out of my arms." Thus in the midst of visits to the Coliseum and St. Peter's, the drama of early affection

goes always on. "I used to take her to hear the band, in the carriage, and she went everywhere I did."

But the love of all dolls, as of other pets, must end with a tragedy, and here it comes. "The next place we went to was Lucerne. There was a lovely lake there, but I had a very sad time. One day I thought I 'd take baby down to breakfast, and, as I was going upstairs, my foot slipped and baby broke her head. And oh, I felt so bad! and I cried out, and I ran upstairs to Annie, and mamma came, and oh, we were all so sorry! And mamma said she thought I could get another head, but I said, 'It won't be the same baby.' And mamma said may be we could make it seem so."

At this crisis the elder brother and sister departed for Mount Righi. "They were going to stay all night, and mamma and I stayed at home to take care of each other. I felt very bad about baby and about their going, too. After they went, mamma and I thought we would go to the little town and see what we could find." After many difficulties, a waxen head was discovered. "Mamma bought it, and we took it home and put it on baby; but I said it was n't like my real baby, only it was better than having no child at all!"

This crushing bereavement, this reluctant

acceptance of a child by adoption, to fill the vacant heart, — how real and formidable is all this rehearsal of the tragedies of maturer years! I knew an instance in which the last impulse of ebbing life was such a gush of imaginary motherhood. A dear friend of mine, whose sweet charities prolong into a third generation the unbounded benevolence of old Isaac Hopper, used to go at Christmas-time with dolls and other gifts to the poor children on Randall's Island. Passing the bed of a little girl whom the physician pronounced to be unconscious and dying, the kind visitor insisted on putting a doll into her arms. Instantly the eyes of the little invalid opened, and she pressed the gift eagerly to her heart, murmuring over it and caressing it. The matron afterwards wrote that the child died within two hours, wearing a happy face, and still clinging to her new-found treasure.

And beginning with this transfer of all human associations to a doll, the child's life interfuses itself readily among all the affairs of the elders. In its presence, formality vanishes; the most oppressive ceremonial is a little relieved when children enter. Their influence is pervasive and irresistible, like that of water, which adapts itself to any landscape, — always takes its place, welcome or unwelcome, — keeps its

own level and seems always to have its natural and proper margin. Out of doors how children mingle with nature, and seem to begin just where birds and butterflies leave off! Leigh Hunt, with his delicate perceptions, paints this well: "The voices of children seem as natural to the early morning as the voice of the birds. The suddenness, the lightness, the loudness, the sweet confusion, the sparkling gayety, seem alike in both. The sudden little jangle is now here and now there; and now a single voice calls to another, and the boy is off like the bird." So Heine, with deeper thoughtfulness, noticed the "intimacy with the trees" of the little wood-gatherer in the Hartz Mountains; soon the child whistled like a linnet, and the other birds all answered him; then he disappeared in the thicket with his bare feet and his bundle of brushwood. "Children," thought Heine, "are younger than we, and can still remember the time when they were trees or birds, and can therefore understand and speak their language; but we are grown old, and have too many cares, and too much jurisprudence and bad poetry in our heads."

But why go to literature for a recognition of what one may see by opening one's eyes? Before my window there is a pool, two rods square, that is haunted all winter by children,

— clearing away the snow of many a storm, if need be, and mining downward till they strike the ice. I look this morning from the window, and the pond is bare. In a moment I happen to look again, and it is covered with a swarm of boys; a great migrating flock has settled upon it, as if swooping down from parts unknown to scream and sport themselves here. The air is full of their voices; they have all tugged on their skates instantaneously, as it were by magic. Now they are in a confused cluster, now they sweep round and round in a circle, now it is broken into fragments and as quickly formed again; games are improvised and abandoned; there seems to be no plan or leader, but all do as they please, and yet somehow act in concert, and all chatter all the time. Now they have alighted, every one, upon the bank of snow that edges the pond, each scraping a little hollow in which to perch. Now every perch is vacant again, for they are all in motion; each moment increases the jangle of shrill voices, — since a boy's outdoor whisper to his nearest crony is as if he was hailing a ship in the offing, — and what they are all saying can no more be made out than if they were a flock of gulls or blackbirds. I look away from the window once more, and when I glance out again there is not a boy in sight. They

have whirled away like snowbirds, and the little pool sleeps motionless beneath the cheerful wintry sun. Who but must see how gradually the joyous life of the animal rises through childhood into man, — since the soaring gnats, the glancing fishes, the sliding seals are all represented in this mob of half-grown boyhood just released from school.

If I were to choose among all gifts and qualities that which, on the whole, makes life pleasantest, I should select the love of children. No circumstance can render this world wholly a solitude to one who has that possession. It is a freemasonry. Wherever one goes, there are the little brethren and sisters of the mystic tie. No diversity of race or tongue makes much difference. A smile speaks the universal language. "If I value myself on anything," said the lonely Hawthorne, "it is on having a smile that children love." They are such prompt little beings; they require so little prelude; hearts are won in two minutes, at that frank period, and so long as you are true to them they will be true to you. They need no argument, no bribery. They have a hearty appetite for gifts, no doubt, but it is not for these that they love the giver. Take the wealth of the world and lavish it with counterfeited affection: I will win all the children's hearts

away from you by empty-handed love. The gorgeous toys will dazzle them for an hour; then their instincts will revert to their natural friends. In visiting a house where there are children I do not like to take them presents: it is better to forego the pleasure of the giving than to divide the welcome between yourself and the gift. Let that follow after you are gone.

It is an exaggerated compliment to women when we ascribe to them alone this natural sympathy with childhood. It is an individual, not a sexual trait, and is stronger in many men than in many women. It is nowhere better exhibited in literature than where the happy Wilhelm Meister takes his boy by the hand, to lead him "into the free and lordly world." Such love is not universal among the other sex, though men, in that humility which so adorns their natures, keep up the pleasing fiction that it is. As a general rule, any little girl feels some glimmerings of emotion towards anything that can pass for a doll, but it does not follow that, when grown older, she will feel as ready an instinct toward every child. Try it. Point out to a woman some bundle of blue-and-white or white-and-scarlet in some one's arms at the next street corner. Ask her, "Do you love that baby?" Not one woman in three will say

promptly, "Yes." The others will hesitate, will bid you wait till they are nearer, till they can personally inspect the little thing and take an inventory of its traits; it may be dirty, too; it may be diseased. Ah! but this is not to love children, and you might as well be a man. To love children is to love childhood, instinctively, at whatever distance, the first impulse being one of attraction, though it may be checked by later discoveries. Unless your heart commands at least as long a range as your eye, it is not worth much. The dearest saint in my calendar never entered a railway car that she did not look round for a baby, which, when discovered, must always be won at once into her arms. If it was dirty, she would have been glad to bathe it; if ill, to heal it. It would not have seemed to her anything worthy the name of love, to seek only those who were wholesome and clean. Like the young girl in Holmes's most touching poem, she would have claimed as her own the outcast child whom nurses and physicians had abandoned.

> "'Take her, dread Angel! Break in love
> This bruised reed and make it thine!'
> No voice descended from above,
> But Avis answered, 'She is mine!'"

When I think of the self-devotion which the human heart can contain — of those saintly

souls that are in love with sorrow, and that yearn to shelter all weakness and all grief — it inspires an unspeakable confidence that there must also be an instinct of parentage beyond this human race, a heart of hearts, *cor cordium*. As we all crave something to protect, so we long to feel ourselves protected. We are all infants before the Infinite; and as I turned from that cottage window to the resplendent sky, it was easy to fancy that mute embrace, that shadowy symbol of affection, expanding from the narrow lattice till it touched the stars, gathering every created soul into the arms of Immortal Love.

X

A SEARCH FOR THE PLEIADES

THE newspapers describe a throng of tourists as passing through the White Mountains all summer long; but we forget that, when tried by the standard of Swiss or Scotch hill-country, ours is still unexplored and unopened. Even the laborious Appalachian Club has as yet barely called attention to a few of the wilder recesses. Half a mile to the right or left of many a much-travelled pathway lies the untamed and shaggy wilderness, traversed here and there, at intervals of years, by some hunter or trapper, but too high in air for the lumberman or trout fisherman, and unseen by the tourist. It is the realm of the shy deer and bear, of the nocturnal *loup-cervier* and catamount; one may thread his way through it for many hours without coming upon the trace of a human being. It was in such a region, on the side of Mount Moosilauke, that I went to seek for the Pleiades.

Few of the White Mountains have summits so fine and characteristic in their formation

as is that of Moosilauke. After you ascend above the more luxuriant vegetation, and find yourself in a cooler zone, passing, as it were, from summer back to spring, — leaving, for instance, the ripe red raspberries below, and finding them still green above, — after you have come to interrupted groves and ever-dwindling trees, you step out at length upon a bare and narrow ridge. With one bold curve, it sweeps away in air, and leads the eye to a little summit half a mile beyond, on which the Tip-Top House, a low stone building, clings. There can be nothing finer than this curving crest, raised nearly five thousand feet above the sea level, and just wide enough to hold the rough wagon road built some years since to the top. As you traverse it, you seem to walk along the heights of heaven. Looking down, you see on one hand all the fertile valley of the Connecticut and the broad farms of Vermont; and on the other side there lie spread all Maine and New Hampshire. Within the embrace of this bending ridge, held as in its arm, there drops a precipitous gorge, densely wooded and utterly pathless, and it was in this wild depth, known locally as the Jobildunk Ravine, that the Pleiades were to be sought.

Little, the historian of Warren, describes this ravine as "wild and hideous," and estimates its

depth at three thousand feet. Osgood's White Mountain Guide-Book says that it is "one of the wildest places in the State, but is difficult to explore on account of its forests," and adds that "in its upper part are the woodland beauties of the Seven Cascades." At the two hotels on the side of the mountain we found no very definite knowledge of these cascades, and they were confounded with certain other waterfalls on Baker's River, several miles away. At a late field meeting of the Appalachian Club, however, an interesting report had been presented by Rev. G. H. Scott of Plymouth, N. H., who, with the Rev. H. O. Ladd of Hopkinton, had once spent the night on top of Moosilauke, had descended into Jobildunk Ravine next day for fishing purposes, and had come upon these falls; after which they had followed Gorge Brook, as it is called, through the forest to Baker's River, and so on to the village of Warren. These two explorers, it appeared, were so delighted with the beauty of the cascades as to feel moved to do all that could be done for them in recognition; so in due form, by what may be called a self-acting baptismal process, — since the brook itself furnished the font, — they christened the sisterhood "the Pleiades." Such was the region we wished to visit.

The rule as to the inevitable exaggeration of

the unseen — *omne ignotum pro mirifico* — applies only to the person nearest to the wonder, and for all others is reversed. The larger your estimate of the size of your unlanded trout, the more derisively small is the guess of your fellow fishermen. As with unseen trout, so with waterfalls unvisited; and Mr. Scott soon found that he must inspect his newly christened cascades again, and take with him witnesses. I went as one of these, we having as our guide James Merrill, of the Breezy Point House, who had long hunted and trapped through all that region, and had, many years ago, passed by these falls, though he was now by no means sure of their precise position.

It was the hottest day of the summer; the breeziness of the hotel which was our rendezvous lay that day in its name only, and the mercury on the piazza stood at 85° Fahrenheit in the shade. As we had come from Plymouth, N. H., in the morning, we could not set off on our walk until a little before noon, and must stop presently to eat our lunch. When we resumed our march, it was still within that period of the day when, as the ancients fabled, the great god Pan sleeps, and must not be awakened, and when even wood-paths are apt to be unshaded; and as we climbed we found ourselves zigzagging from side to side, to make

the most of every bit of protection, — beating up to shadowward, as it were, instead of to windward. Our guide walked on before us, erect and manly, wearing one of those broad canvas hats which are characteristic of this region, and furnish one of our few glimpses of picturesque costume. He had led for years the genuinely outdoor life which belongs to our mountaineers. As a rule, farmers are far less rich in conversation than seaside people, — sailors, pilots, fishermen; the rural lives are rather monotonous and uneventful; but when you come where the farms actually abut upon untamed forest, the art of conversation revives, and James Merrill was as good as Thoreau, so far as the habit of observation could carry him. That he did not sometimes romance a little, I am not quite prepared to affirm.

He showed us, in the occasional deposits of soft mud by the water bars on the mountain road, how to distinguish squirrel tracks, sable tracks, bear tracks. A bear had passed, as he proved to us, within a few days, had weighed about one hundred and seventy-five pounds, and was probably two years old. He pointed out to us where, in sandy places, the young partridges had nestled and fluttered like hens in the path, and where the hedgehogs had gnawed and torn the roots in the wood. He told us

how these little "quill-pigs," as they are popularly called, defend themselves with their tails, thrashing them about till the nose of a dog or other animal is full of bristles; the dogs instinctively fear this, and seize the creature by the head, where the bristles turn the other way, and cannot hurt. The hedgehog is in winter the chief food of the "fisher-cat," and this in turn is trapped for its fur. This small quadruped is jet black, with a few white hairs; is as large as a large cat, but is shaped like a mink, having short legs. The fisher-cat and sable — pronounced uniformly "saple" — climb trees like cats, in pursuit of squirrels, and will run from tree to tree as easily as the game they hunt, though unable to spring like them through the air. Both of these species are active and daring, venturing sometimes into the hunters' camps at night in search of food. The ordinary wildcat, or "bob-cat," or "lucivee" (*loup-cervier*) is also found on Moosilauke, but not the larger "catamount," or that half-mythical beast known among Maine lumbermen as the "Indian devil." This bob-cat is often as large to the eye as a Newfoundland dog, but its fur is so deceptively thick that it really does not weigh more than thirty pounds. Merrill was eloquent about its shriek at night. "When you hear it near you," he said, "it makes every

hair stand up straight, and you feel about as big as your finger. I have heard it when it made me feel as if my hat was two feet from my head. It is as much bigger than the house cat's noise as that is bigger than a canary's."

Of the larger animals, the deer is still hunted in this region, although the present laws, which protect these animals from January 1 to August 1, have cut off the snow-hunting, which was the most profitable. Before this legislation, Merrill had once taken three deer alive in a single day, pursuing them in snowshoes with a dog, when the slender hoofs cut through the crusted snow, and they could be overtaken. When thrown down in the snow the deer defend themselves actively with their hoofs, which are used very swiftly and cut like razors. The best way to quiet them is to hold their heads down by the ears, and after this has been done for ten or fifteen minutes they will usually submit, and can afterwards be led along, although sometimes the old bucks will fight, from first to last, so furiously that the hunter, entangled in his snowshoes, must kill his opponent in self-defence. Of bears not more than three or four are annually taken here, — a bounty of ten dollars being paid, — but a good many visit the region, keeping in the valley between Moosilauke and Carr's

Mountain, and always attracted by ponds and sloughs, in which they wallow, and by berry pastures, among which they feed. The foot-prints we saw — in which the claws, by the way, were to be clearly distinguished — were near a large patch of wild raspberries. Wolves are pretty well exterminated from this whole region. The last report of one was several years ago, when some unknown animal devastated the sheepfolds. A mighty hunter from beyond the mountain was offered forty dollars by the farmers, in addition to the legal bounty of half that sum, for the destruction of the wolf. He brought in the head, as by law required, and received the money; but avowed, a year or two later, that he had only exhibited the head of a harmless dog, peculiarly wolf-like in appearance, which he had bought for a dollar in a distant hamlet. However, the sheepfolds were thenceforth left unmolested, though the unseen enemy was never trapped.

Many of our guide's facts were before known to us, but some were wholly new, as when he told us that a deer, if forced into water too shallow for his long legs, will swim easily on his side, instead of wading. There is always pleasure in listening to the simplest woodcraft from those who habitually live by its pursuit, — those who know nothing of books, but supply obser-

vations for the bookmakers. Such talk links us with the Rocky Mountains, with Scott's novels, and with the great French forests in old days of royal hunting. All the "venerers, prickers, and verderers" of romance have now come down to a few plain incidents like these, but no matter; so long as there is a squirrel on a bough or a partridge in the woods, it will keep us in contact with that healthful outdoor nature which is the background of all our civilization. Thus discoursing, at any rate, we toiled up the mountain beneath an increasing shade. It was pretty to observe the graceful effect of the increased elevation on the wild-flowers. At the base, this being August 2, I sought in vain among the wood-sorrel and dwarf-cornel leaves for a single blossom; when half way up we saw them beginning to spangle the green beds; and at the top they were in fullest bloom, amid the linnæa and mountain cranberry. It was strange also to see meadow plants, like the snakehead and American hellebore, growing abundantly in dry places at an elevation of four thousand feet; and even to find lingering blossoms of the latter, which we are accustomed to regard as an early spring flower. The longer one lives, the less rigid appear the rules and forms of external nature; she seems to bid her wild-flowers bloom where

she will, and almost when she will, and to delight in setting at naught the most careful assertions of the botanists. The time may come, perhaps, when one can pluck passion flowers off a glacier without surprise, so fearless are nature's combinations.

All the party had climbed Moosilauke before, and there had been a good deal of debate as to whether, for our present purpose, we should leave the mountain path far down, and strike through the forest for the base of the cascades, or whether we should ascend nearly to the summit and search downward for the uppermost falls. The latter counsel at length prevailed, and even the point of departure was fixed upon. There are on Moosilauke several springs of water, along its upper regions, — each kindly provided by some good Samaritan with sheets of birch bark, such as Samaria never saw, but such as the New Hampshire woodsman easily twists into a cup. At the highest of these springs — said popularly, but wrongly, to be the origin of the very brook in question — we left the carriage road, and struck boldly downwards into the unbroken woods. In two minutes we seemed wholly beyond reach of the steep height we were leaving behind us, so sharp was the descent. It seemed as irretraceable as a plunge over Niagara, and all civilized

and sheltered life was as absolutely withdrawn. Beneath us and around us was a craggy world of boulders and broken rock, all united into one continuous and treacherous surface by an emerald garment of the softest moss. Our feet sank and slipped in it; it was a delicious cushion on which to leap from rock to rock; but the leaps were too dangerous, for none could tell by the eye whether there was any foothold. Meantime we were twisting and writhing our bodies among closely set trees, never very large, since it was too high in air for that, but tough and firmly knit, their branches being stunted into a magnificent vigor. Their insecurity was in their foothold among those mossy rocks: in some cases they had so wrenched and griped their roots into the crevices as to seem a part of the mountain side, while other trees were scarcely more than poised upon the rocks, and were wholly unable to bear the weight of a man. The brook soon disappeared beneath the rocks, leaving only moisture enough for the beautiful slender spikes of the northern white orchis (*Platanthera dilatata*), which we afterwards found abundantly throughout the watercourses of the ravine. Still we descended; it seemed like slipping cautiously down the interminable steeple of a gigantic church, on which boulders had somehow stayed

themselves, and trees and moss had contrived to grow. The great danger was of going forward headlong, with a sudden insertion of one's feet in a sharp cleft of these beautiful, treacherous, moss-hidden rocks. It was a positive relief to tread occasionally upon some prostrate tree trunk, green with ferns and half decayed, yet bristling with spiked branches, and giving a safe though difficult bridge, as it slanted down the hillside. Meanwhile we could see nothing overhead or outward, so dense were the trunks and boughs; and we had only an occasional glimpse of the broad hat of our guide, still descending without remorse. Once, when we had halted, and some one had expressed fervent gratitude that we had not to reascend that formidable ravine, Merrill looked round with a chuckle, and said, "It would be easier to go up there again than to go back the way you expect to go." We too looked round and up. The suggestion seemed like that of reclimbing the church steeple already mentioned, and holding on by the moss as we went up. Any distance, any form of descent, should be welcomed, we resolved, rather than attempt that "wild and hideous" climb.

During all this time we had listened vainly for the brook, which should be rippling somewhere below. If it was there, every step of

our stumbling progress brought us nearer to it; but no one knew just where to find it, and there was a perpetual murmur in the trees, drowning all minor sounds. At length a softer plash, as of plunging waters, mingled in the strain, and almost before we knew it we stood in a green dell, where all the shaggy terrors of the precipitous ravine suddenly vanished, as if they had never been. We stood with level feet at last, beside a little stream, on whose flat and mossy rocks it seemed as if nothing rougher than the moccasined foot of an Indian had ever rested. As far up and down as the woods disclosed them extended a series of dainty waterfalls, — never high or sweeping, like the Artists' Fall in North Conway, or the far bolder Llama Falls near Lake Dunmore in Vermont, but more like the graceful Chase Cascades in Brattleborough, as they were while yet unspoiled. As for the precise number of these cascades in Jobildunk Ravine, it was of no consequence; the brook dropped almost continuously from ledge to ledge, and there might be seven or seventeen, as one chose to count them for purposes of baptism. At any rate, our lost Pleiades were found.

When we had once reached them, instantaneous was the change in our condition. No longer slipping and staggering down the craggy

ravine, amid tangled roots and trunks, seeking in vain for a footing, until, as in Lowell's description of old-time Cambridge mud, one's legs became mere corkscrews to extract one's boots, — no longer thus afflicted, we trod on smooth slabs of rock, cushioned with velvet moss, that would have invited repose but for the delicate rills of trickling water that preserved its emerald hue. What matter for these! — they cooled our feet; and very sweet was the forest chill that made an atmosphere about the stream. A lingering "Peabody-bird" welcomed us from the ravine, now silent with summer. Above and below us spread the cascades: some spanned by forest trunks, long since fallen, but still green with mosses; others open to the sky, and with only a suggestive rill of water; while others, again, held even this little stream invisible, murmuring beneath the rocks. We could not have asked for a sweeter rest after our descent, or for a lovelier bower of peace, than we found in the valley of the Seven Cascades.

There is nothing in nature so shy and virginal as a cascade in primeval woods; it seems alone with its own beauty, and unfit for any ruder contact than that of the deer which comes, timid and lonely as itself, to drink at its pure basin. On this particular day, it must be

owned, we could have wished for our wood nymph an ampler garment of water. Still there was enough to adorn her beauty, and we could readily accept the apologies of our friend, the original explorer, who had seen her, so to speak, in full flow of drapery. But it is the beauty of a cascade, as of a lake, that it adapts itself easily to any margin; nor did the beauty of this scene of peace require for its full appreciation the severe prelude of fatigue through which we had passed.

The immediate question before us was that which the English poet Faber long since set to music, "Up a stream or down?" We had struck the cascades, it was guessed, about half way up their course; and they were, at any rate, so much nearer the top of the ravine than the bottom that it was a question which route to pursue. We could follow them up and reach the summit, thence descending the mountain by the ordinary road; or we could follow the stream itself down, an easier but perhaps longer route, especially with a guide not thoroughly familiar with the way. It was already half past four, and, being on the eastern or shadowy slope of Moosilauke, we could not safely count on more than two hours of time. Deciding, at last, to ascend, we pressed on in the path of the brook, our feet treading

"On the stubs of living rock
Ages ago it crenelled,"

as Browning has it. A few turns of the stream brought us to the most beautiful cascade of all. Looking upward, we saw a green cave or grotto, built with the regularity of art, and arching towards us over the little pool into which its waters fell. The cascade came from an overhanging ledge, precisely as if the arch which surmounted the cave had lost its keystone, and the water passed through between two mossy slabs. The fall was of eight or ten feet only, but the hollow cave which received it — a grotto all emerald with glistening moss — gave it a beauty that nothing was needed to enhance except the solitary deer which should have been, but was not, drinking in that still place.

The brook soon left us, dwindling to a gurgle among the stones, and then vanishing, while we pushed on towards upper air, our guide marking the trees for future explorers, or for a possible pathway. We noted how skilfully he "spotted" with his axe, — the word "blaze" is rarely used, in this sense, in New England, — not cutting deeply in, as a novice would have done, but simply scarring the bark, and thus leaving a more unmistakable mark for future years than if the wood itself were indented. The wall we were climbing grew rapidly steeper,

until it was the counterpart of that we had descended; and though the fatigue of the ascent was doubtless greater, we yet knew better what we were doing, and the risk of broken limbs was less. At intervals we had glimpses of the ridge above us, still seeming incredibly far away, and gradually swathed in such a dimness that we knew, although we could not see, that the vapors must be gathering in the air. Still we toiled on, up mossy dells, palisaded with the shy white orchis, until suddenly a shout from some one above caused me to look round, and I saw a sight of exquisite beauty. An opening in the woods showed the ravine behind us, dark, almost black, with shadow; but beyond this the sunlight was so poured on the eastern slope of Mount Washington and his companions as to make them glisten in double prominence, and it was almost impossible to believe that they were not snow-covered, — I do not mean coated with continuous and dazzling snow, like Mont Blanc, but rather clad in that scattered and sprinkled whiteness which clings upon the terrible peak of the Matterhorn. As we went a step farther, the trees hid this fair sight, and we entered a domain of utter shadow, fitly preparing us for the change that was presently to come, in the drama of the day.

Climbing a few steps higher, I saw clearly —

for we were now getting above the trees — the meaning of the deepening blackness and the weird light. A storm was upon us, — such a storm as explained the superstitions of Indians about these mountain summits, and their refusal to climb them. The sky was all obscured, — not densely black, as with a thunder-cloud, but lighter than the already dark ravine; yet there were flashes of lightning in it, and murmurings of thunder. Its chief terror appeared to lie not in darkness but in motion. All immediately around us was absolutely still, yet on the side of the ravine toward the Tip-Top House there was in the woods a roar that I can only describe as ferocious; it seemed as if the force which made that sound could sweep from the ravine below us the whole forest that clothed it, and count the work a trifle. Meantime, upon the mountain crest the mass of pale cloud was accumulating, and suddenly, as with one word of command, it was unloosed. We saw a detached body of cloud, that seemed to obey an order of its own and have its own separate work to do, come sweeping down into the ravine beside us — not toward us — with a sense of power and direction that no wings of eagles could symbolize, and an effect of swiftness such as no swallow's flight, no rush of railway train, could represent. I knew that it was

a filmy, bodiless thing, — that if it changed direction and came toward us we should know it but as rain and wind; yet as I watched it, the Oriental hymns to the storm-gods seemed too little for an invocation of its power, and one could fancy a great army of men halting and retreating before its awful majesty. "The charge of the six hundred!" called one of my companions. The clouds went first, the rain followed; we could see it pouring in great sheets between us and the side of the ravine, and yet we escaped for a time. At last it reached us.

It came with a discharge like that from a steam fire-engine, yet we were by this time so warm that we welcomed it for our bodies' sake; we were like men working at a great conflagration, who beseech the engines to play on them. Yet the instinct of self-protection for a moment prevailed; and the dwarf spruce-trees under which we could easily shelter ourselves made a dry defence. But what was the use? Every atom of vegetation must soon be saturated, and we were now where we must crawl through it, and under it, and over it, to reach the top. We were in the region known as "scrub," — above where trees could be trees, but where they were condensed into stiff bushes, gnarled spikes, holding in every twig the

vigor of a limb. Vegetation driven to its alpine stronghold does its worst at last, before it vanishes and leaves you in free air. You must clamber above it, you must burrow through it; you cannot stop to find out whether it is branch or root on which you are treading, since they seem equally rugged. Sometimes, in creeping beneath a bough, I found myself trailing my wet breast over some exquisite bed of wood-sorrel and linnæa, the sweet pink flowers fading unseen where no eye had looked on their race before.

At last, as by magic, all obstruction vanished, and I stood in increasing darkness on the bare ridge, with thousands of feet of stormy vapor spreading and sinking on either hand. So great was the sense of freedom — for there was now nothing before us but a descent of five miles by the rough carriage road to Merrill's — that I remember no feeling except of exhilaration. I had nothing on but a thin tennis shirt and trousers, with shoes and stockings all saturated; but I recall a distinct savage enjoyment in the pelting of the cold rain, mixed with a slight hail, upon my shoulders. Fatigue seemed to vanish; we all felt as if at the beginning of our day's work. Nature presently responded to our mood; already the veil of cloud was thin over the western outlook, and soon it

burst away into soft, rosy fragments. The vast valley of the Connecticut, with nearly all of Vermont, lay visible before us ; lakes glistened, grain-fields spread, glimpses of rivers showed themselves. It was like a vast battlefield in the multiplicity of little vapors that hung over detached points, and on distant hills lay level bars of absolutely golden light. The Green Mountains and the far Adirondacks and the curious Notch in which lies Willoughby Lake were all closely shrouded with these gorgeous splendors ; and as we looked down from above, it was as if the sunset itself lay in state. Yet glittering raindrops were still falling on us, and we were glad to speed rapidly downward, away from this bright scene, to the mountain's foot, there to seek dry clothing, made up from many wardrobes, at the Breezy Point House, and to take our way by the mountain wagon to the railway station. The next day we felt a certain triumph amidst our bruises. We were not exactly like Keats's

> "watcher of the skies
> When a new planet swims into his ken,"

but we had at least rediscovered the Pleiades.

XI

FAYAL AND THE PORTUGUESE

(1855–56)

EVERY man when he first crosses the ocean is a Columbus to himself, no matter how many voyages by other navigators he may have heard described. Geographies convince only the brain, not the senses, that the globe is round; and when personal experience proves the fact, it is as wonderful as if never before suggested. You have dwelt for weeks within one unbroken loneliness of sea and sky, finding nothing that seemed solid in the universe but the bit of painted wood on which you have floated. Suddenly one morning something looms high and cloudlike far away, and you are told that it is land. Then you feel, with all ignorant races, as if the ship were a god, thus to find its way over that trackless waste; or as if this must be some great and unprecedented success, and by no means the expected or usual result of such enterprises. An intelligent sea-captain of twenty-five years' experience once told me that

this sensation never wore off, and that he still felt as fresh a sense of something extraordinary, at the sight of land, as upon his first voyage. To discover for one's self that there is really another side to the ocean, — that is the astonishing thing. And when it happens, as in our case, that the haven thus gained is not merely a part of a great continent which the stupidest ship could not miss, if it only sailed far enough, but is actually a small volcanic island, a mere dot among those wild waves, a thing which one might easily have passed in the night, unsuspecting, and which yet was not so passed, — it really seems like the maddest piece of good luck, as if one should go to sea in a bowl, hoping somewhere or other to land on the edge of a teacup.

As next day we stumbled on deck in the foggy dawn, the dim island five miles off seemed only dawning too; a shapeless thing, half formed out of chaos, as if the leagues of gray ocean had grown weary of their eternal loneliness, and bungled into something solid at last. The phrase "making land" at once became the simple and necessary expression; we had come upon the very process itself. Nearer still, the cliffs five hundred feet in height, and the bare conical hills of the interior, divided everywhere by cane hedges into a regular checker-work of

cultivation, prolonged the mystery, and the glimpses of white villages scarcely seemed to break the spell. Point after point we passed, — great shoulders of volcanic mountain thrust out to meet the sea, with steep green ravines furrowed in between them; and when at last we rounded the Espalamarca, and the white walls and the Moorish towers of Horta stood revealed before us, and a stray sunbeam pierced the clouds on the great mountain Pico across the bay, and the Spanish steamship in the harbor flung out her gorgeous ensign of gold and blood, — then, indeed, we felt that all the glowing cup of the tropics was proffered to our lips, and the dream of our voyage stood fulfilled.

Not one of our immediate party, most happily, had ever been beyond Boston harbor before, and so we all plunged without fear or apology into the delicious sense of foreignness; we moved as those in dreams. No one could ever precisely remember what we said or what we did, only that we were somehow boated ashore till we landed with difficulty through high surf on a wave-worn quay, amid an enthusiastic throng of women in dark blue hooded cloaks which we all took for priestly vestments, and of beggars in a combination of patches which no sane person could reasonably take for vestments of any sort, until one saw how scru-

pulously they were washed and how carefully put together.

The one overwhelming fact of the first day abroad is the simple sensation that one *is* abroad: a truth that can never be made anything but commonplace in the telling, or anything but wonderful in the fulfilling. What Emerson says of the landscape is true here: no particular foreign country is so remarkable as the necessity of being remarkable under which every foreign country lies. Horace Walpole found nothing in Europe so astonishing as Calais; and we felt that at every moment the first edge of novelty was being taken off for life, and that, if we were to continue our journey round the world, we never could have that first day's sensations again. Yet because no one can spare time to describe it at the moment, this first day has never yet been described; all books of travels begin on the second day; the photographic machine is not ready till the expression has begun to fade out. Months had been spent in questioning our travelled friends, sheets of old correspondence had been disinterred, sketches studied, Bullar's unsatisfactory book read; and now we were on the spot, and it seemed as if every line and letter must have been intended to describe some other place on the earth, and not this strange, picturesque, Portuguese, Semi-Moorish Fayal.

One general truth came over us instantly, and it was strange to think that no one had happened to speak of it before. The essence of the surprise was this. We had always been left to suppose that in a foreign country one would immediately begin to look about and observe the foreign things, — these novel details having of course that groundwork of ordinary human life, the same all the world over. To our amazement, we found that it was the groundwork that was foreign; we were shifted off our feet; not the details, but the basis itself was wholly new and bewildering; and instead of noting down, like intelligent travellers, the objects which were new, we found ourselves stupidly staring about to find something which was old, — a square inch of surface anywhere which looked like anything ever seen before, — that we might take our departure from that, and then begin to improve our minds. Perhaps this is difficult for the first hours in any foreign country; certainly the untravelled American finds it utterly impossible in Fayal. Consider the incongruities. The beach beneath your feet, instead of being white or yellow, is black; the cliffs beside you are white or red, instead of black or gray. The houses are of white plaster on the outside, with woodwork, often painted in gay stripes, within. There are no

chimneys to the buildings, but sometimes there is a building to the chimney ; the latter being a picturesque tower with smoke coming from the top and a house appended to the base. One half the women go about bareheaded, save a handkerchief, and with a good deal of bareness at the other extremity, — while the other half wear vast conical hoods attached to voluminous cloth cloaks which sweep the ground. The men cover their heads with all sorts of burdens, and their feet with nothing, or else with raw-hide slippers, hair outside. There is no roar or rumble in the streets, for there are no vehicles and no horses, but an endless stream of little donkeys, clicking the rough pavement beneath their sharp hoofs, and thumped solidly by screaming drivers. Who wears the new shoes on the island does not appear, since almost everybody goes barefoot ; but the hens limp about the houses, tethered to old ones.

Further inspection reveals new marvels. The houses are roofed with red and black tiles, semicylindrical in shape and rusty in surface, and making the whole town look as if incrusted with barnacles. There is never a pane of glass on the lower story, even for the shops, but only barred windows and solid doors. Every house has a paved courtyard for the ground floor, into which donkeys may be driven and where

beggars or peasants may wait, and where one naturally expects to find Gil Blas in one corner and Sancho Panza in another. An English lady, on arriving, declared that our hotel was only a donkey stable, and refused to enter it. In the intervals between the houses the streets are lined with solid stone walls from ten to twenty feet high, protecting the gardens behind; and there is another stone wall inclosing the town on the water side, as if to keep the people from being spilled out. One must go some miles into the country before getting beyond these walls, or seeing an inch on either side. This would be intolerable, of course, were the country a level; but as every rod of ground slopes up or down, it simply seems like walking through a series of roofless ropewalks or bowling-alleys, each being tilted up at an angle, so that one observes the landscape through the top, but never over the sides. Thus, walking or riding, one seldom sees the immediate foreground, but a changing background of soft valleys, an endless patchwork of varied green rising to the mountains in the interior of the island, or sinking to the blue sea, beyond which the mountain Pico rears its graceful outline across the bay.

From the street below comes up a constant hum of loud voices, often rising so high that

one runs to see the fight commence, and by the time one has crossed the room it has all subsided and everybody is walking off in good humor. Meanwhile the grave little donkeys are constantly pattering by, sometimes in pairs or in fours with a cask slung between. And mingled with these, in the middle of the street, there is an endless stream of picturesque figures, everybody bearing something on the head, — girls, with high water-jars, each with a green bough thrust in, to keep the water sweet; boys, with baskets of fruit and vegetables; men, with boxes, bales, bags, or trunks for the custom-house, or an enormous fagot of small sticks for firewood, or a long pole hung with wooden jars of milk, or with live chickens, head downward, or perhaps a basket of red and blue and golden fishes, fresh from the ocean and glistening in the sun. The strength of these Portuguese necks seems wonderful, as does also their power of balancing. On a rainy day I have seen a tall man walk gravely along the middle of the street through the whole length of the town, bearing a large empty cask balanced upon his head, over both of which he held an umbrella.

Perhaps it is a procession day, and all the saints of some church are taken out for an airing. They are figures composed of wood and

wax, life-size, and in full costume, each having a complete separate wardrobe, but more tawdry and shabby, let us hope, than the originals ever indulged in. Here are Saint Francis and Saint Isabella, Saint Peter with a monk kneeling before him, and Saint Margaret with her dog, and the sceptred and ermined Saint Louis; and then Joseph and Mary sitting amicably upon the same platform, with an additional force of bearers to sustain them. For this is the procession of the *Bem-casados* or Well-married, in honor of the parents of Jesus. Then there are lofty crucifixes and waving flags; and when the great banner comes in sight, bearing simply the letters S. P. Q. R., one starts in wonder at that mighty superstition which has grasped the very central symbol of ancient empire, and brought it down, like a boulder on a glacier, into modern days. The letters which once meant *Senatus Populusque Romanus* stand now only for the feebler modern formula, *Salve populum quem redemisti.*

All these shabby splendors are interspersed among the rank and file of several hundred lay brethren of different orders, ranging in years from six to sixty. The Carmelites wear a sort of white bathing-dress, and the Brotherhood of Saint Francis are clothed in long brown robes, girded with coarse rope. The very old and the

very young look rather picturesque in these disguises, the latter especially, urchins with almost baby faces, toddling along with lighted candle in hand ; and one often feels astonished to recognize some familiar porter or shopkeeper in this ecclesiastical dress, as when discovering a pacific next-door neighbor beneath the bearskin of an American militia-man. A fit suggestion ; for next follows a detachment of Portuguese troops-of-the-line, — twenty shambling men in short jackets, with hair shaved close, looking much like children's wooden monkeys, but by no means alive enough for the real ones. They straggle along, scarcely less irregular in aspect than the main body of the procession ; they march to the tap of the drum. I never saw a Fourth of July procession in the remotest of our rural districts which was not beautiful, compared to this forlorn display ; but the popular homage is duly given, the bells jangle incessantly, and as the procession passes, all men uncover their heads or have their hats knocked off by official authority.

Still watching from our hotel window, turn now from the sham picturesqueness of the church to the real and unconscious picturesqueness of every day. It is the orange season, and beneath us streams an endless throng of men, women, and children, each bearing on the

head a great graceful basket of yellow treasures. Opposite our window there is a wall by which they rest themselves, after their three-mile walk from the gardens. There they lounge and there they chatter. Little boys come slyly to pilfer oranges, and are pelted away with other oranges; for a single orange has here no more appreciable value than a single apple in our farmers' orchards; and, indeed, the windfalls are left to decay in both cases. During this season one sees oranges everywhere, even displayed as a sort of thank-offering on the humble altars of country churches; the children's lips and cheeks assume a chronic yellowness; and the narrow sidewalks are strewn with bits of peel, punched through and through by the boys' popguns, as our boys punch slices of potato.

All this procession files down, the whole day long, to the orange yards by the quay. There one finds another merry group, or a series of groups, receiving and sorting the fragrant loads, papering, packing, boxing. In the gardens there seems no end to the varieties of the golden fruit, although only one or two are here being packed. There are shaddocks, *zamboas*, limes, sour lemons, sweet lemons, oranges proper, and *Tangerinhas;* these last being delicate, perfumed, thin-skinned miniature fruit from the land of the Moors. One may begin to eat

oranges at Fayal in November, but no discriminating person eats a whole one before March; a few slices are cut from the sunny side, and the rest is thrown upon the ground. One learns to reverse the ordinary principles of selection also, and choose the smaller and darker before the large and yellow; the very finest in appearance being thrown aside by the packers as worthless. Of these packers the Messrs. Dabney employ two hundred, and five hundred besides in the transportation. One knows at a glance whether the cargo is destined for America or England, the English boxes having the thin wooden top bent into a sort of dome, almost doubling the solid contents of the box. This is to evade the duty, the custom-house measurement being taken only at the corners. It also enables the London dealers to remove some two hundred oranges from every box, and still send it into the country as full. When one thinks what a knowing race we came from, it is really wonderful where we Yankees picked up our honesty.

Let us take one more glance from the window; for there is a mighty jingling and rattling, the children are all running to see something, and the carriage is approaching. "The carriage:" it is said advisedly; for there is but one street on the island passable to such an

equipage, and but one such equipage to enjoy its privileges, — only one, that is, drawn by horses. There are three other vehicles, each the object of admiration, but each hauled by oxen only. There is the Baroness, who sports a sort of butcher's cart, with a white top; within lies a mattress, and on the mattress recline her ladyship and her daughter, as the cart rumbles and stumbles over the stones; — nor they alone, for on emerging from an evening party, I have seen the oxen of the Baroness, unharnessed, quietly munching their hay at the foot of the stairs, while a pair of bare feet emerging from one end of the vehicle, and a hearty snore from the other, showed the mattress to be found a convenience by some one beside the nobility. Secondly, there is a stout gentleman near the hotel, reputed to possess eleven daughters, and known to possess a pea-green omnibus mounted on an ox-cart; the windows are all closed with blinds, and the number of young ladies may be an approximation only. Lastly, there sometimes rolls slowly by an expensive English curricle, lately imported; the springs are somehow deranged, so that it hangs entirely on one side; three ladies ride within, and the proprietor sits on the box, surveying in calm delight his two red oxen with their sky-blue yoke and the tall peasant who drives them with a goad.

After a few days of gazing at objects like these, one is ready to recur to the maps, and become statistical. It would be needless to say — but that we all know far less of geography than we are supposed to know — that the Azores are about two thirds of the way across the Atlantic, and are about the latitude of Philadelphia, sharing, however, in the greater warmth of the European coast, and slightly affected, also, by the Gulf Stream. The islands are supposed to have been known to the Phœnicians, and Humboldt holds out a flattering possibility of Phœnician traces yet discoverable. This lent additional interest to a mysterious inscription which we hunted up in a church built in the time of Philip II., at the north end of the island; we had the satisfaction of sending a copy of it to Humboldt, though it may after all be only a Latin inscription clothed in uncouth Greek characters, such as have long passed for Runic in the Belgian churches and elsewhere. The Phœnician traces remain to be detected; so does a statue which is fabled to exist on the shore of one of the smaller islands, where Columbus landed in some of his earlier voyages, and, pacing the beach, looked eagerly towards the western sea: the statue is supposed still to portray him. In the fifteenth century, at any rate, the islands were rediscovered. Since then they have always

been under Portuguese control, including in that phrase the period when Philip II. united that crown with his own; and they are ruled now by Portuguese military and civil governors with the aid of local legislatures.

Fayal stands, with Pico and San Jorge, rather isolated from the rest of the group, and out of their sight. It is the largest and most populous of the islands, except St. Michael and Terceira; it has the best harbor and by far the greater share of American commerce, St. Michael taking most of the English. Whalers put into Fayal for fresh vegetables and supplies, and to transship their oil; while distressed vessels often seek the harbor to repair damages. The island is twenty-five miles long, and shaped like a turtle; the cliffs along the sea range from five hundred to a thousand feet in height, and the mountainous interior rises to three thousand. The sea is far more restless than upon our coast, the surf habitually higher; and there is such a depth of water in many places around the shore, that, on one occasion, a whaleship, drawn too near by the current, broke her main yard against the cliff, without grazing her keel.

The population numbers about twenty-five thousand, one half of these being found in the city of Horta, and the rest scattered in some

forty little hamlets lying at irregular distances along the shores. There are very few English or French residents, and no Americans but the different branches of the Consul's family, — a race whose reputation for all generous virtues has spread too widely to leave any impropriety in mentioning them here. Their energy and character have made themselves felt in every part of the island; and in the villages farthest from their charming home one has simply to speak of *a familha*, "the family," and the introduction is sufficient. Almost every good institution or enterprise on the island is the creation of Mr. Charles W. Dabney. He transacts without charge the trade in vegetables between the peasants and the whale-ships, guaranteeing the price to the producers, giving them the profits, if any, and taking the risk himself; and the only provision for pauperism is found in his charities. Every Saturday, rain or shine, there flocks together from all parts of the island a singular collection of aged people, lame, halt, and blind, who receive, to the number of two hundred, a weekly donation of ten cents each, making a thousand dollars annually. This constitutes but a small part of the benefactions of this remarkable man, the true father of the island, with twenty-five thousand grown children under his charge.

Ten cents a week may not seem worth a whole day's journey on foot, but by the Fayal standard it is not unprofitable. The usual rate of wages for an able-bodied man is sixteen cents a day; and an acquaintance of ours, who had just got a job on the roads at thirty cents a day, declined a good opportunity to emigrate to America, on the ground that it was best to let well alone. Yet the price of provisions is by no means very low, and the difference is chiefly in abstinence. Fuel and clothing cost little, however, since little is needed, — except that no woman thinks herself really respectable until she has her great blue cloak, which requires an outlay of from fifteen to thirty dollars, though the whole remaining wardrobe may not be worth half that. The poorer classes pay about a dollar a month in rent; they eat fish several times a week and meat twice or thrice a year, living chiefly upon the coarsest corn bread, with yams and beans. Still they contrive to have their luxuries. A soldier's wife, an elderly woman, said to me pathetically, "We have six *vintems* (twelve cents) a day, — my husband smokes and I take snuff, — and how are we to buy shoes and stockings?" But the most extreme case of economy which I discovered was that of a poor old woman, unable to tell her own age, who boarded with a poor family for

four *patacos* (twenty cents) a month, or five cents a week. She had, she said, a little place in the chimney to sleep in, and when they had too large a fire, she went out of doors.

Steeped in this utter poverty, — dwelling in low, dark, smoky huts, with earthen floors, — it is yet wonderful to see how these people preserve not merely the decencies, but even the amenities of life. Their clothes are a chaos of patches, but one sees no rags; all their well-worn white garments are white in the superlative degree; and when their scanty supply of water is at the scantiest, every bare foot on the island is sure to be washed in warm water at night. Certainly there are fleas and there are filthinesses in some directions; and yet it is amazing, especially for one accustomed to the Irish, to see an extreme of poverty so much greater, with such an utter absence of squalidness. But when all this is said and done, the position of the people of Fayal is an abject one, that is, it is a European position; it teaches more of history in a day to an untravelled American than all his studies had told him besides, — and he returns home ready to acquiesce in a thousand dissatisfactions, in view of that most wondrous of all recorded social changes, the transformation of the European peasant into the American citizen.

Fayal is not an expensive place. One pays six dollars a week at an excellent hotel, and there is nothing else to spend money on, except beggars and donkeys. For a shilling an hour one can ride, or, as the Portuguese phrase perhaps circuitously expresses it, go to walk on horseback on a donkey, — *dar um passeio a cavalho n'um burro.* The beggars, indeed, are numerous; but one's expenditures are always happily limited by the great scarcity of small change. A half cent, however, will buy you blessings enough for a lifetime, and you can find an investment in almost any direction. You visit some church or cemetery; you ask a question or two of a lounger in a black cloak, with an air like an exiled Stuart, and, as you part, he detains you, saying, "Sir, will you give me some little thing (*alguma cousinha*), — I am so poor?" Overwhelmed with a sense of personal humility, you pull out three half cents and present them with a touch of your hat; he receives them with the same, and you go home with a feeling that a distinguished honor has been done you. The Spaniards say that the Portuguese are "mean even in their begging:" they certainly make their benefactors mean; and I can remember to have returned home, after giving away a *pataco* (five cents), with a debilitating sense of too profuse philanthropy.

It is inevitable that even the genteel life of Fayal should share this parsimony. As a general rule, the higher classes on the island, socially speaking, live on astonishingly small means. How they do it is a mystery; but families of eight contrive to spend only three or four hundred dollars a year, and yet keep several servants, and always appear rather stylishly dressed. The low rate of wages — two dollars a month at the very highest — makes household service a cheap luxury. I was told of a family which employed two domestics upon an income of a hundred and twenty dollars. Persons come to beg, sometimes, and bring a servant to carry home what is given. I never saw a mechanic carry his tools; if it be only a hammer, the hired boy must come to fetch it.

Fortunately, there is not much to transport, the mechanic arts being in a very rudimentary condition. For instance, there are no saw-horses or hand-saws, the smallest saw used being a miniature wood-saw, with the steel set at an angle, in a peculiar manner. It takes three men to saw a plank: one to hold the plank, another to do the work, and a third to carry away the pieces. Farming tools have the same simplicity. It is one odd result of the universal bare feet that they never will use spades, but everything is done with a hoe, most skil-

fully wielded. There are no wheelbarrows, but baskets are the universal substitutes. The plough is made entirely of wood, only pointed with iron, and is borne to and from the field on the shoulder. The carts are picturesque, but clumsy; they are made of wicker-work, and the iron-shod wheels are solidly attached to the axle, so that all revolves together, amid fearful creaking. The people could not be induced to use a cart with movable wheels which was imported from America, nor will they even grease their axles, because the noise is held to drive away witches. Some other arts are a little more advanced, as any visitor to Mr. Harper's pleasant Fayal shop in Boston may discover. The islanders make homespun cloth upon a simple loom, and out of their smoky huts come beautiful embroideries and stockings whose fineness is almost unequalled. Their baskets are strong and graceful, and I have seen men sitting in village doorways, weaving the beautiful broom-plant, yellow flowers and all, until basket and bouquet seemed one.

The greater part of the surface of the island is cultivated like a kitchen garden, even up to the top of volcanic cones eight hundred feet high, and accessible only by steps cut in the earth. All the land is divided into little rectangular patches of various verdure, — yellow-blos-

somed broom, blue-flowering flax, and the contrasting green of lupines, beans, Indian corn, and potatoes. There is not a blade of genuine grass on the island, except on the Consul's lawn, but the ground is covered with red heather, low *faya* bushes, — whence the name of the island, — and a great variety of mosses. The cattle are fed on beans and lupines. Firewood is obtained from the opposite island of Pico, five miles off, and from the *Caldeira* or Crater, a pit five miles round and fifteen hundred feet deep, at the summit of Fayal, whence great fagots are brought upon the heads of men and girls. It is an oversight in the "New American Cyclopædia" to say of Fayal that "the chief object of agriculture is the vine," because there are not a half-dozen vineyards on the island, the soil being unsuitable; but there are extensive vineyards on Pico, and these are owned almost wholly by proprietors resident in Fayal.

There is a succession of crops of vegetables throughout the year; peas are green in January, which is, indeed, said to be the most verdant month of the twelve, the fields in summer becoming parched and yellow. The mercury usually ranges from 50° to 80° Fahrenheit, winter and summer; but we were there during an unusually cool season, and it went down to 45°. This was regarded as very severe by the thinly

clad Fayalese, and I sometimes went into cottages and found the children lying in bed to keep warm. Yet roses, geraniums, and callas bloomed out of doors all the time, and great trees of red camellia, which they cut as we cut roses. Superb scarlet banana flowers decked our Christmas-tree. Deciduous trees lose their leaves in winter there, however, and exotic plants retain the habits they brought with them, with one singular exception. The *Morus multicaulis* was imported, and the silk manufacture with it. Suddenly the trees seemed to grow bewildered; they put forth earlier and earlier in the spring, until they got back to January; the leaves at last fell so early that the worms died before spinning cocoons, and the whole enterprise was in a few years abandoned because of this vegetable insanity.

In spite of the absence of snow and presence of verdure, this falling of the leaves gives some hint of winter; yet blackbirds and canaries sing without ceasing. The latter are a variety possessing rather inferior charms, compared with the domestic species; but they have a pretty habit of flying away to Pico every night. It was pleasant to sit at sunset on the high cliffs at the end of the island and watch the little brown creatures, like fragments of the rock itself, whirled away over the foaming ocean.

The orange orchards were rather a disappointment. They suggested quince-trees with more shining leaves; and, indeed, there was a hard, glossy, coriaceous look to the vegetation generally, which made us sometimes long for the soft, tender green of more temperate zones. The novel beauty of the Dabney gardens can scarcely be exaggerated; each step was a new incursion into the tropics, — a palm, a magnolia, a camphor-tree, a dragon-tree, suggesting Humboldt and Orotava, a clump of bamboos or cork-trees, or the startling strangeness of the great grass-like banana, itself a jungle. There are hedges of pittosporum, arbors veiled by passion flowers, and two specimens of that most beautiful of all living trees, the *araucaria*, or Norfolk Island pine, — one of these being some eighty feet high, and said to be the largest north of the equator. When over all this luxuriant exotic beauty the soft clouds furled away and the sun showed us Pico, we had no more to ask, and the soft, beautiful blue cone became an altar for our gratitude, and the thin mist of hot volcanic air that flickered above it seemed the rising incense of the world.

In the midst of all these charming surprises, we all found it hard to begin upon the study of the language, although the prospect of a six months' stay made it desirable. We were

pleased to experience the odd, stupid sensation of having people talk loud to us as being foreigners, and of seeing even the little children so much more at their ease than we were; and every step beyond this was a new enjoyment. We found the requisites for learning a language on its own soil to be a firm will, a quick ear, flexible lips, and a great deal of cool audacity. Plunge boldly in, expecting to make countless blunders; find out the shops where they speak English, and avoid them; make your first bargains at twenty-five per cent disadvantage, and charge it as a lesson in the language; expect to be laughed at, and laugh yourself, because you win. The daily labor is its own reward. If it is a pleasure to look through a telescope in an observatory, gradually increasing its powers until a dim nebula is resolved into a whole galaxy of separate stars, how much more when the nebula is one of language, close around you, and the telescope is your own more educated ear!

We discovered further, what no one had ever told us, that the ability to speak French, however poorly, is rather a drawback in learning any less universal language, because the best company in any nation will usually have some knowledge of French, and this tempts one to remain on neutral ground and be lazy. But

the best company in Fayal was so much less interesting than the peasantry, that some of us persevered in studying the vernacular. To be sure, one finds English spoken by more of the peasants than of the small aristocracy of the island, because many of the poorer class have spent some years in American whale-ships, and come back to settle down with their savings in their native village. In visiting the smaller hamlets on the island, I usually found that the owners of the two or three most decent houses had learned to speak English in this way. But I was amused at the dismay of an American sea-captain who during a shooting excursion ventured on some free criticisms on the agriculture of a farm, and was soon answered in excellent English by the proprietor.

"Look at the foolish fellow," quoth the captain, "carrying his plough to the field on his shoulder!"

"Sir," said the Portuguese coolly, "I have no other way to take it there."

The American reserved his fire, thereafter, for bipeds with wings.

These Americanized sailors form a sort of humbler aristocracy in Fayal, and are apt to pride themselves on their superior knowledge of the world, though their sober habits have commonly saved them from the demoralization

of a sailor's life. But the untravelled Fayalese peasantry are a very gentle, affectionate, child-like people, pensive rather than gay; industrious, but not ingenious; with few amusements and those the simplest; incapable of great crimes or very heroic virtues; educated by their religion up to the point of reverent obedience, and no higher.

Among the young men and boys, one sees the true olive cheeks and magnificent black eyes of Southern races. The women of Fayal are not considered remarkable for beauty, but in the villages of Pico one sees in the doorways of hovels complexions like rose petals, and faces such as one attributes to Evangeline, soft, shy, and innocent. Yet the figure is the chief wonder, the figure of woman as she was meant to be, beautiful in superb vigor, — not fragile and tottering, as happens so often with us, but erect and strong and stately; every muscle fresh and alive, from the crown of the steady head to the sole of the emancipated foot, — and yet not heavy and clumsy, as one fancies barefooted women must be, but inheriting symmetry and grace from the Portuguese or Moorish blood. I have looked in vain through the crowded halls of Newport for one such figure as I have again and again seen descending those steep mountain paths with a bundle of firewood on the

head, or ascending them with a basket of farm manure.

This condition of health cannot be attributed to any mere advantage of climate. The higher classes of Fayal are feeble and sickly; their diet is bad, they take no exercise, and suffer the consequences; they have all the ills to which flesh is heir, including one specially Portuguese complaint, known by the odd name of *dôr do cotovelo*, elbow disease, which corresponds to that known to Anglo-Saxons, by an equally bold symbol, as the green-eyed monster, Jealousy. So the physical superiority of the peasantry seems to come solely from their mode of life, — outdoor labor, simple diet, and bare feet. Change these and their health goes; domestic service in foreign families on the island always makes them ill, and often destroys their health and bloom forever; and, strange to say, that which most nauseates and deranges their whole physical condition, in such cases, is the necessity of wearing shoes and stockings.

The Pico peasants have also the advantage of the Fayalese in picturesqueness of costume. The men wear homespun blue jackets and blue or white trousers, with a high woollen cap of red or blue. The women wear a white waist with a gay kerchief crossed above the bosom, a full short skirt of blue, red, or white, and a

man's jacket of blue, with tight sleeves. On the head there is the pretty round-topped straw hat with red and white cord, which is now so extensively imported from Fayal; and beneath this there is always another kerchief, tied under the chin, or hanging loosely. The costume is said to vary in every village, but in the villages opposite Horta this dress is worn by every woman from grandmother to smallest granddaughter; and when one sails across the harbor in the lateen-sail packet-boat, and old and young come forth on the rocks to see the arrival, it seems like voyaging to some realm of butterflies.

Their outdoor life begins very early. As soon as the Fayalese baby is old enough to sit up alone, he is sent into the nursery. The nursery is the sunny side of the house door. A large stone is selected, in a convenient position, and there the little dusky creature squats, hour after hour, clad in one garment at most, and looking at the universe through two black beads of eyes. Often the little dog comes and suns himself close by, and the little cat beside the dog, and the little pig beside the cat, and the little hen beside the pig, — a "Happy Family," a row of little traps to catch sunbeams, all down the lane. When older, the same child harnesses his horse and wagon, he

being the horse and a sheep's jawbone the wagon, and trots contentedly along, in almost the smallest amount of costume accessible to mortals. All this refers to the genuine, happy, plebeian baby. The genteel baby is probably as wretched in Fayal as elsewhere, but he is kept more out of sight.

These children are seldom noisy and never rude: the race is not hilarious, and their politeness is inborn. Not an urchin of three can be induced to accept a sugarplum until he has shyly slid off his little cap, if he has one, and kissed his plump little hand. The manners of princes can hardly surpass the natural courtesy of yonder peasant, as he insists on climbing the orange-tree to select for you the choicest fruit. A shopkeeper can never sell you a handful of nuts without first bringing the bundle near to his lips with a graceful wave of salutation. A lady from Lisbon told us that this politeness surpassed that of the native Portuguese; and the wife of an English captain, who had sailed with her husband from port to port for fifteen years, said that she had never seen anything to equal it. It is not the slavishness of inferiors, for the poorest exhibit it towards each other. You see two very old women talking eagerly in the street, each in a cloak whose every square inch is a patch, and every patch a different

shade, — and each alternate word you hear seems to be *Senhora*. Among laboring men, the most available medium of courtesy is the cigarette; it contains about four whiffs, and is smoked by about that number of separate persons.

But to appreciate in full this natural courtesy, one must visit the humbler Fayalese at home. You enter a low stone hut, thatched and windowless, and you find the mistress within, a robust, black-eyed, dark-skinned woman, engaged in grinding corn with a Scriptural hand-mill. She bars your way with apologies; you must not enter so poor a house; you are so beautiful, so perfect, and she is so poor, she has "nothing but the day and the night," or some equally poetic phrase. But you enter and talk with her a little, and she readily shows you all her little possessions, — her chest on the earthen floor, her one chair and stool, her tallow candle stuck against the wall, her husk mattress rolled together, with the precious blue cloak inside of it. Behind a curtain of coarse straw-work is a sort of small boudoir, holding things more private, an old barrel with the winter's fuel in it, a few ears of corn hanging against the wall, a pair of shoes, and a shelf with a large pasteboard box. The box she opens triumphantly and exhibits her *santinhos*, or little images of

saints. This is San Antonio, and that is Nossa Senhora do Conceição, Our Lady of the Conception. She prays to them every day for sunshine; but they do not seem to hear, this winter, she says, and it rains all the time. Then, approaching the climax of her blessedness, with beaming face she opens a door in the wall, and shows you her pig.

The courtesy of the higher classes tends to formalism, and has stamped itself on the language in some very odd ways. The tendency common to all tongues, towards a disuse of the second person singular, as too blunt and familiar, is carried so far in Spanish and Portuguese as to disuse the second person plural also, except in the family circle, and to substitute the indirect phrases, *vuestra Merced* (in Spanish) and *vossa Mercé* (in Portuguese), both much contracted in speaking and in familiar writing, and both signifying "your Grace." The joke of invariably applying this epithet to one's valet would seem sufficiently grotesque in either language, and here the Spanish stops; but Portuguese propriety has gone so far that even this phrase has become too hackneyed to be civil. In talking with your equals, it would be held an insult to call them simply "your Grace;" it must be some phrase still more courtly, — *vossa Excellencia*, or *vossa Senhoria*.

One may hear an elderly gentleman talking to a young girl of fourteen, or, better still, two such damsels talking together, and it is "your Excellency" at every sentence; and the address on an envelope for a married lady is *Illustrissima Excellentissima Senhora Dona.* The lower classes have not quite reached the "Excellency," but have got beyond the "Grace," and hence the personal pronouns are in a state of colloquial chaos, and the only safe way is to hold to the third person and repeat the name of Manuel or Maria, or whatever it may be, as often as possible.

This leads naturally to the mention of another peculiar usage. On visiting the Fayal post-office, I was amazed to find the letters arranged alphabetically in the order of the baptismal, not the family names, of the persons concerned, — as if we should enumerate Adam, Benjamin, Charles, and so on. But I at once discovered this to be the universal usage. Merchants, for instance, thus file their business papers; or rather, since four fifths of the male baptismal names in the language fall under the four letters, A, F, J, M, they arrange only five bundles, giving one respectively to Antonio, Francisco, José or João, and Manuel, adding a fifth for sundries. This all seemed inexplicable, till at last there proved to be an historical

kernel to the nut. The Portuguese, and to some extent the Spaniards, have kept nearer to the primitive usage which made the personal name the important one and the patronymic quite secondary. John Smith is not known conversationally as Mr. Smith, but as Mr. John, — Senhor João. You may have in society an acquaintance named Senhor Francisco, and another named Senhora Dona Christina, and it may be long before it turns out that they are brother and sister, the family name being, we will suppose, Garcia da Rosa; and even then it will be doubtful whether to call them Garcia or da Rosa. This explains the great multiplication of names in Spain and Portugal. The first name being the important one, the others may be added, subtracted, multiplied, or divided, with perfect freedom. A wife may or may not add her husband's name to her own; the eldest son takes some of the father's family names, the second son some of the mother's, saints' names are sprinkled in to suit the taste, and no confusion is produced, because the first name is the only one in common use. Each may, if he pleases, carry all his ancestors on his visiting card, without any inconvenience except the cost of pasteboard.

Fayal exhibits another point of courtesy to be studied. The gentleman of our party was

early warned that it was very well to learn his way about the streets, but far more essential to know the way to the brim of his hat. Every gentleman touches his hat to every lady, acquaintance or stranger, in street or balcony. So readily does one grow used to this, that I was astonished, for a moment, at the rudeness of some French officers, just landed from a frigate, who passed some ladies, friends of mine, without raising the hat. "Are these," I asked, "the polite Frenchmen of whom one reads?" — not reflecting that I myself should not have ventured on bowing to strange ladies in the same position, without special instruction in Portuguese courtesies. These little refinements became, indeed, very agreeable, only alloyed by the spirit of caste in which they were performed, — elbowing the peasant woman off the sidewalk for the sake of doffing the hat to the Baroness. I thought of the impartial courtesies shown towards woman as woman in my own country, and the spread eagle within me flapped his pinions. Then I asked myself, "What if the woman were black?" and the eagle immediately closed his wings, and flapped no more. But I may add, that afterwards, attending dances among the peasants, I was surprised to see my graceful swains in humble life smoking and spitting in the presence of

white-robed belles, in a manner not to be witnessed on our farthest western borders.

The position of woman in Portuguese countries brings one nearer to that Oriental type from which modern society has been gradually diverging. Woman is secluded, so far as each household can afford it, and this is the key to the Oriental system. Seclusion is aristocracy, and if it cannot be made complete, the family must do the best they can. Thus, in the lowest classes, one daughter is often decreed by the parents to be brought up like a lady, and for this every sacrifice is to be made. Her robust sisters go barefooted to the wells for water; they go miles unprotected into the lonely mountains; no social ambition, no genteel helplessness for them. But Mariquinha is taught to read, write, and sew; she is as carefully looked after as if the world wished to steal her; she wears shoes and stockings and an embroidered kerchief and a hooded cloak; and she never steps outside the door alone. You meet her, pale and demure, plodding along to mass with her mother. The sisters will marry laborers and fishermen; Mariquinha will marry a small shopkeeper or the mate of a vessel, or else die single. It is not very pleasant for the poor girl in the mean time; she is neither healthy nor happy; but "let us be genteel or die."

On *festa* days she and her mother draw their hoods so low and their muffling handkerchiefs so high that the costume is as good as a *yashmak*, and in passing through the streets these one-eyed women seem like an importation from the "Arabian Nights." Ladies of higher rank, also, wear the hooded cloak for disguise and greater freedom, and at a fashionable wedding in the cathedral I have seen the jewelled fingers of the uninvited acquaintances gleam from the blue folds of humble broadcloth. But very rarely does one see the aristocratic lady in the street in her own French apparel, and never alone. There must be a male relative, or a servant, or at the very least a female companion. Even the ladies of the American Consul's family very rarely go out singly, — not from any fear, for the people are as harmless as birds, but from etiquette. The first foreign lady who walked habitually alone in the streets was at once christened "The Crazy American." A lady must not be escorted home from an evening party by a gentleman, but by a servant with a lantern ; and as the streets have no lamps, I never could see the breaking up of any such entertainment without recalling Retzsch's quaint pictures of the little German towns, and the burghers plodding home with their lanterns, — unless, perchance, what a German friend of

ours called innocently a "sit-down chair" came rattling by, and transferred our associations to Cranford and Mr. Winkle.

We found or fancied other Orientalisms. A visitor claps his hands at the head of the court-yard stairs, to summon an attendant. The solid chimneys, with windows in them, are precisely those described by Urquhart in his delightful "Pillars of Hercules;" so are the gardens, divided into clean separate cells by tall hedges of cane; so is the game of ball played by the boys in the street, under the self-same Moorish name of *arri;* so is the mode of making butter, by tying up the cream in a goatskin and kicking it till the butter comes. Even the architecture fused into one all our notions of Gothic and of Moorish, and gave great plausibility to Urquhart's ingenious argument for the latter as the true original. And it is a singular fact that the Mohammedan phrase *Oxalá*, "Would to Allah," is still the most familiar ejaculation in the Portuguese language, and the habitual phrase by which religious aspiration is expressed in books.

We were treated with great courtesy and hospitality by our Portuguese neighbors, and an evening party in Fayal is in some respects worth describing. As one enters, the anteroom is crowded with gentlemen, and the chief recep-

tion-room seems like a large omnibus, lighted, dressed with flowers, and having a row of ladies on each side. The personal beauty is perhaps less than one expects — though one sees some superb dark eyes and blue-black hair — and the dresses are borrowed from rather distant French fashions. Presently a lady takes her seat at the piano, then comes an eager rush of gentlemen into the room, and partners are taken for cotillons, — large, double, *very* double cotillons, here called *contradanças*. The gentlemen appear in scrupulous black broadcloth and satin and white kid; in summer alone are they permitted to wear white trousers to parties; and we heard of one anxious youth who, about the turn of the season, wore the black and carried the white in his pocket, peeping through the door, on arrival, to see which had the majority. It seemed a pity to waste such gifts of discretion on a monarchical country, when he might have emigrated to America and applied them to politics.

The company perform their dancing with the accustomed air of civilized solemnity. Changes of figure are announced by a clapping of hands from one of the gentlemen, and a chorus of such applauses marks the end of the dance. Then they promenade slowly round the room, once or twice, in pairs; then the ladies take their

seats, and instantly each gentleman walks hurriedly into the anteroom, and for ten minutes there is as absolute a separation of the sexes as in a Friends' Meeting. Nobody approves this arrangement, in the abstract; it is all very well, they think, for foreign gentlemen to remain in the room, but it is not the Portuguese custom. Yet, with this exception, the manners are agreeably simple. Your admission to the house guarantees you as a proper acquaintance, there are no introductions, and you may address any one in any language you can coin into a sentence. Many speak French, and two or three English, — sometimes with an odd mingling of dialects, as when the Military Governor answered my inquiry, made in timid Portuguese, as to how long he had served in the army. "*Vinte-cinco annos*," he answered, in the same language; then, with an effort after an unexceptionable translation, "Vat you call, twenty-cinq year!"

The great obstacle to the dialogue soon becomes, however, a deficit of subjects rather than of words. Most of these ladies never go out except to mass and to parties, they never read, and if one of them has some knowledge of geography, it is quite an extended education; so that, when you have asked them if they have ever been to St. Michael, and they

have answered, Yes, — or to Lisbon, and they have answered, No, — then social intercourse rather flags. I gladly record, however, that there were some remarkable exceptions to this, and that we found in the family of the late eminent Portuguese statesman, Mousinho d'Albuquerque, accomplishments and knowledge which made their acquaintance an honor.

During the intervals of the dancing, little trays of tea and of cakes are repeatedly carried round, — astonishing cakes, in every gradation of insipidity, with the oddest names : white poison, nuns' kisses, angels' crops, cats' tails, heavenly bacon, royal eggs, coruscations, cocked hats, and *esquecidos*, or oblivion cakes, the butter being omitted. It seems an unexpected symbol of the plaintive melancholy of the Portuguese character that the small confections which we call kisses they call sighs, *suspiros*. As night advances, the cakes grow sweeter and the dances livelier, and the pretty national dances are at last introduced, though these are never seen to such advantage as when the peasants perform them on a Saturday or Sunday evening to the monotonous strain of a viola, the musician himself taking part in the complicated dance, and all the men chanting the refrain. Nevertheless they add to the gayety of our genteel entertainment, and you may stay at

the party as long as you have patience, — if till four in the morning, so much the better for your popularity; for though the gathering may consist of but thirty people, they like to make the most of it.

Perhaps the next day one of these new friends kindly sends in a present for the ladies of the party: a bouquet of natural flowers with the petals carefully gilded; a *folar*, or Easter cake, being a large loaf of sweetened bread, baked in a ring, and having whole eggs, shell and all, in the midst of it. One lady of our acquaintance received a pretty basket, which being opened revealed two little Portuguese pigs, about eight inches long, snow-white, scented with cologne, and wearing blue ribbons round their necks.

Beyond these occasional parties, there seems very little society during the winter, the native ladies seldom either walking or riding, and there being no places of secular amusement. In summer, it is said, when the principal families resort to their vineyards at Pico, formalities are laid aside, and a simpler intercourse takes place. But I never saw any existence more thoroughly pitiable than that of the young men of the higher classes; they had literally nothing to do, except to dress themselves elegantly and lounge all day in an apothecary's shop. A very

few went out shooting or fishing occasionally; but anything like employment, even mercantile, was entirely beneath their caste; and they only pardoned the constant industry of the American Consul and his family as a sort of national eccentricity, for which they must not be severely condemned.

A good school system is being introduced into all the Portuguese dominions, but there is no bookstore in Fayal, though some dry-goods dealers sell a few religious books. We heard a rumor of a Portuguese "Uncle Tom" also, but I never could find the copy. The old convent libraries were sent to Lisbon, on the suppression of the monasteries, and never returned. There was once a printing-press on the island, but one of the governors shipped it off to St. Michael. "There it goes," he said to the American Consul, "and the Devil take it!" The vessel was wrecked in the bay. "You see," he afterwards piously added, "the Devil *has* taken it." It is proper, however, to mention that a press and a newspaper have been established since our visit, without further Satanic interference.

Books proved to be scarce on the island. One official gentleman from Lisbon, quite an accomplished man, who spoke French fluently and English tolerably, had some five hundred

books, chiefly in the former tongue, including seventy-two volumes of Balzac. His daughter, a young lady of fifteen, more accomplished than most of the belles of the island, showed me her little library of books in French and Portuguese, including three English volumes, an odd selection, — "The Vicar of Wakefield," Gregory's "Legacy to his Daughters," and Fielding's "Life of Jonathan Wild." But, indeed, her supply of modern Portuguese literature was almost as scanty, — there is so very little of it, — and we heard of a gentleman's studying French "in order to have something to read," which seemed the last stage in national decay.

Perhaps we were still more startled by the unexpected literary criticisms of a young lady from St. Michael, English on the father's side, but still Roman Catholic, who had just read the New Testament, and thus naively gave it her indorsement in a letter to an American friend: "I dare say you have read the New Testament; but if you have not, I recommend it to you. I have just finished reading it, and find it a very moral and nice book." After this certificate, it will be safe for the Bible Society to continue its operations.

Nearly all the popular amusements in Fayal occur in connection with religion. After the simpler buildings and rites of the Romish

Church in America, the Fayal churches impress one as vast baby houses, and the services as acted charades. This perfect intermingling of the religious and the melodramatic was one of our most interesting experiences, and made the Miracle Plays of history a very simple and intelligible thing. In Fayal holiday and holy-day have not yet undergone the slightest separation. A festival has to the people necessarily some religious association, and when the Americans celebrate the Fourth of July, Mr. Dabney's servants like to dress with flowers a wooden image in his garden, the fierce figure-head of some wrecked vessel, which they boldly personify as the American Saint. On the other hand, the properties of the church are as freely used for merrymaking. On public days there are fireworks provided by the priests; they are kept in the church till the time comes, and are then touched off in front of the building, with very limited success, by the sacristan. And strangest of all, at the final puff and bang of each remarkable piece of pyrotechny, the bells ring out just the same sudden clang which marks the agonizing moment of the Elevation of the Host.

On the same principle, the theatricals which occasionally enliven the island take place in chapels adjoining the churches. I shall never

forget the example I saw, on one of these dramatic occasions, of that one cardinal virtue of Patience, which is to the Portuguese race the substitute for all more positive manly qualities. The performance was to be by amateurs, and a written programme had been sent from house to house during the day; and this had announced the curtain as sure to rise at eight. But as most of the spectators went at six to secure places, — literally, places, for each carried his or her own chair, — one might suppose the audience a little impatient before the appointed hour arrived. Yet one would then suppose very incorrectly. Eight o'clock came, and a quarter past eight, but no curtain rose. Half past eight. No movement nor sign of any. The people sat still. A quarter to nine. The people sat still. Nine o'clock. The people sat perfectly still, nobody talking much, the gentlemen being all the while separated from the ladies, and all quiet. At last, at a quarter past nine, the orchestra came in! The performers sat down, laid aside their instruments, and looked about them. Suddenly a whistle was heard behind the scenes. Nothing came of it, however. After a time, another whistle. The people sat still. Then the orchestra began to tune the instruments, and at half past nine the overture began. And during all that inexplica-

ble delay of one hour and a half, after a preliminary waiting of two hours, there was not a single look of annoyance or impatience, or the slightest indication, on any face, that this was viewed as a strange or extraordinary thing.

We duly attended, not on this occasion only, but at all ecclesiastical festivals, grave or gay, — the only difficulty being to discover any person in town who had even approximate information as to when or where they were to occur. We saw many sights that are universal in Roman Catholic countries, and many that are peculiar to Fayal: we saw the "Procession of the Empress," when, for six successive Saturday evenings, young girls walked in order through the streets white robed and crowned; saw the vessels in harbor decorated with dangling effigies of Judas, on the appointed day; saw the bands of men at Easter going about with flags and plates to beg money for the churches, and returning at night with feet suspiciously unsteady; saw the feet washing on Maundy-Thursday, of twelve old men, each having a square inch of the instep washed, wiped, and cautiously kissed by the Vicar-General, after which twelve lemons were solemnly distributed, each with a silver coin stuck into the peel; saw and felt the showers of water, beans, flour, oranges, eggs, from the balcony windows dur-

ing Carnival; saw weddings in churches, with groups of male companions holding tall candles round kneeling brides; saw the distribution to the poor of bread and meat and wine from long tables arranged down the principal street, on Whitsunday, — a memorial vow, made long since, to deprecate the recurrence of an earthquake. But it must be owned that these things, so unspeakably interesting at first, became a little threadbare before the end of the winter; we grew tired of the tawdriness and shabbiness which pervaded them all, of the coarse faces of the priests, and the rank odor of the incense.

We had left Protestantism in a state of vehement intolerance in America, but we soon found, that, to hear the hardest things said against the priesthood, one must visit a Roman Catholic country. There was no end to the anecdotes of avarice and sensuality which were told to us, and there seemed everywhere the strangest combination of official reverence with personal contempt. The principal official, or *Ouvidor*, was known among his parishioners by the endearing appellation of "The Black Pig," to which epithet his appearance certainly did no discredit. There was a great shipwreck at Pico during our stay, and we heard of two hundred thousand dollars' worth of rich goods stranded on the bare rocks; there were no ade-

quate means for its defence, and the peasants could hardly be expected to keep their hands off. But the foremost hands were those of the parish priest; for three weeks no mass was said in his church, and a funeral was left for days unperformed, that the representative of God might steal more silks and laces. When the next service occurred, the people remained quiet until the priest rose for the sermon; then they rose also tumultuously, and ran out of the church, crying, "*Ladrão!*" "Thief!" "But why this indignation?" said an intelligent Roman Catholic to us; "there is not a priest on either island who would not have done the same." A few days after I saw this same cool critic, candle in hand, heading a solemn ecclesiastical procession in the cathedral.

In the country villages there naturally lingers more undisturbed the simple, picturesque life of Roman Catholic society. Every hamlet is clustered round its church, almost always magnificently situated, and each has its special festivals. Never shall I forget one lovely day when we went to witness the annual services at Praya, held to commemorate an ancient escape from an earthquake. It was the first day of February. After weeks of rain there came at one burst all the luxury of June; winter seemed to pass into summer in a moment, and black-

birds sang on every spray. We walked and rode over a steep promontory, down into a green valley, scooped softly to the sea; the church was by the beach. As we passed along, the steep paths converging from all the hills were full of women and men in spotless blue and white, with bright kerchiefs; they were all walking barefooted over the rocky ways, only the women stopping, ere reaching the church, to don stockings and shoes. Many persons sat in sunny places by the roadside to beg, with few to beg from, — blind old men, and groups of children clamorous for coppers, but propitiated by sugarplums. Many others were bringing offerings, — candles for the altar; poultry, which were piled, a living mass, legs tied, in the corner of the church; and small sums of money, which were recorded by an old man in a mighty book. The church was already so crowded that it was almost impossible to enter; the centre was one great flower garden made of the gay headdresses of kneeling women, and in the aisles were penitents, toiling round the church upon their knees, each bearing a lighted candle. But the services had not yet begun, so we went down among the rocks to eat our luncheon of bread and oranges; the ocean rolled in languidly, a summer sea; we sat beside sheltered, transparent basins, among high

and pointed rocks; and great, indolent waves sometimes reared their heads, looking in upon our retreat, or flooding the calm pools with a surface of creamy effervescence. Every square inch of the universe seemed crowded with particles of summer.

On our way past the church, we had caught a glimpse of unwonted black smallclothes, and slyly peeping into a little chapel, had seen the august Senate of Horta apparently arraying itself for the ceremony. Presently out came a man with a great Portuguese flag, and then the senators, two and two, with short black cloaks, white bands, and gold-tipped staves, trod statelily towards the church. And as we approached the door, on our return, we saw these dignitaries sitting in their great armchairs, as one might fancy Venetian potentates, while a sonorous Portuguese sermon rolled over their heads as innocuously as a Thanksgiving discourse over any New England congregation.

Do not imagine, by the way, that critical remarks on sermons are a monopoly of Protestantism. After one religious service in Fayal, my friend, the Professor of Languages, who sometimes gave lessons in English, remarked to me confidentially, in my own tongue, "His sermon is good, but his exposition is bad; he does not expose well." Supposing him to refer

to the elocution, I assented, — secretly thinking, however, that the divine in question had exposed himself exceedingly well.

Another very impressive ceremony was the Midnight Mass on New Year's eve, when we climbed at midnight, through some close, dark passages in the vast church edifice, into a sort of concealed opera box above the high altar, and suddenly opened windows that looked down into the brilliantly lighted cathedral, crammed with kneeling people, and throbbing with loud music. It seemed centuries away from all modern life, — a glimpse into some buried Pompeii of the Middle Ages.

More impressive still was Holy Week, when there were some rites unknown to other Roman Catholic countries. For three days the great cathedral was closely veiled from without and darkened within, — every door closed, every window obscured. Before this there had been seventy candles lighting up the high altar and the eager faces: now these were all extinguished, and through the dark church came chanting a procession bearing feeble candles and making a strange clapping sound, with *matracas*, like watchmen's rattles ; men carried the symbolical bier of Jesus in the midst, to its symbolical rest beneath the altar, where the three candles, representing the three Maries,

blazed above it. During the time of darkness there were frequent masses and sermons, while terrible transparencies of the Crucifixion were suddenly unrolled from the lofty pulpit, and the throng below wept in sympathy, and clapped their cheeks in token of anguish, like the fluttering of many doves. Then came the Hallelujah Saturday, when at noon the mourning ended. It was a breathless moment. The priests kneeled in gorgeous robes, chanting monotonously, with their foreheads upon the altar steps; and the hushed multitude hung upon their lips, waiting for the coming joy. Suddenly burst the words, *Gloria in Excelsis.* In an instant every door was flung open, every curtain withdrawn, the great church was bathed in meridian sunlight, the organ crashed out triumphant, the bells pealed, flowers were thrown from the galleries, friends embraced each other, laughed, talked, and cried; and all the sea of gay headdresses below was tremulous beneath a mist of unaccustomed splendor.

I cannot dwell upon the narrative of our many walks: to the Espalamarca, with its lonely telegraph station; to the Burnt Mountain, with its colored cliffs; to visit the few aged nuns who still linger in what was once a convent; to Porto Pim, with its curving Italian beach, its playing boys and picturesque fishermen beneath

the arched gateway; to the tufa ledges near by, where the soft rocks are honeycombed with the cells hollowed by echini below the water's edge, a fact then undescribed and almost unexampled, said Agassiz on our return; to the lofty, lonely Monte da Guia, with its solitary chapel on the peak, and its extinct crater, where the sea rolls in and out; to the Dabney orange gardens, on Sunday afternoons; to the beautiful Mirante ravine, which we sought whenever a sudden rain had filled the cascades and set the watermills and the washerwomen all astir, and the long brook ran down in whirls of white foam to the waiting sea; or to the western shores of the island, where we felt like Ariadnes, as we watched ships sailing away towards our distant home.

And I must also pass over still greater things, — the winter storms and shipwrecks, whose annals were they not written by us to the New York "Tribune"? and the spring Sunday at superb Castello Branco, with the whole rural population thronging to meet in enthusiastic affection the unwonted presence of the Consul himself, the feudalism of love; and the ascent of the wild Caldeira, when we climbed height after height, leaving the valleys below mottled with blue-robed women spreading their white garments to dry in the sun, and the great

Pico peeping above the clouds across the bay, and seeming as if directly above our heads, and nodding to us ere it drew back again ; and, best of all, that wonderful ascent, by two of us, of Pico itself, seven thousand feet from the level of the sea, our starting-point. We camped half way up, and watched the sunset over the lower peaks of Fayal ; we kindled fires of *faya* bushes on the lonely mountain-sides, a beacon for the world ; we slept in the loft of a little cattle-shed, with the calves below us, "the cows' sons," as our Portuguese attendant courteously called them ; we waked next morning above the clouds, with one vast floor of white level vapor beneath us, such as Thoreau alone has described, with here and there an open glimpse of the sea far below, yet lifted up to an apparent level with the clouds, so as to seem like an arctic scene, with patches of open water. Then we climbed through endless sheep pastures and over great slabs of lava, growing steeper and steeper ; we entered the crater at last, walled with snows of which portions might be of untold ages, for it is never, I believe, wholly empty ; we climbed, in such a gale of wind that the guides would not follow us, the steeple-like central pinnacle, two hundred feet high ; and there we reached, never to be forgotten, a small central crater at the very summit,

where steam poured up between the stones, — and oh, from what wondrous central depths that steam came to us! There has been no eruption from any portion of Pico for many years, but it is a volcano still, and we knew that we were standing on the narrow and giddy summit of a chimney of the globe. That was a sensation indeed!

We saw many another wild volcanic cliff and fissure and cave on our two days' tour round the island; but it was most startling when, on the first morning of that trip, as we passed through one of many soft green valleys, suddenly all verdure and all life vanished, and we found ourselves riding through a belt of white, coarse moss stretching from mountain to sea, covering rock and wall and shed like snow or moonlight or mountain-laurel or any other pale and glimmering thing; and when, after miles of ignorant wonder, we rode out of it into greenness again and were told that we had crossed what the Portuguese call a *Misterio*, or Mystery, — the track of the last eruption. The white moss was the first garment of vegetation, just clothing those lava rocks once more.

But the time was coming when we must bid good-by to picturesque Fayal. We had been there from November, 1855, to May, 1856; it had been a winter of incessant rains, and the

first essential of life had been a change of umbrellas; it had been colder than usual, making it a comfort to look at our stove, though we had never lighted it; but our invalids had gained by even this degree of mildness, by the wholesome salt dampness, by the comforts of our hotel with its good Portuguese landlord and English landlady, and by the constant kindness shown us by all. At last we had begun to feel that we had squeezed the orange of the Azores a little dry, and we were ready to go. And when, after three weeks of rough sailing, we saw Cape Ann again, although it looked somewhat flat and prosaic after the headlands of Fayal, yet we knew that behind those low shores lay all that our hearts held dearest, and all the noblest hopes of the family of man.

POEMS

TO

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL,

Schoolmate and Fellow Townsman,

THESE POEMS ARE INSCRIBED.

"Alter ab undecimo tum me jam ceperat annus.
Jam fragiles poteram a terrâ contingere ramos."

"Ver erat æternum; placidique tepentibus auris
Mulcebant zephyri natos sine semine flores."

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., U. S. A.,
1889.

POEMS

PRELUDE

I DREAMED one night that the calm hosts of heaven
Had lost their changeless paths; and as I stood
Beside the latticed window, I could watch
Those strange, fair pilgrims wandering from their shrines.
Up to the zenith rose the moon, and paused;
Stars went and came, and waxed and waned again,
Then vanished into nothing; meteors pale
Stole, soft as wind-blown blossoms, down the night;
Till I awoke to find the cold gray morn
Hymning its lonely dirges through the pines.

Were it not better that the planets fail,
And every heavenly orbit wander wide,
Than that this human life, its years like stars,
Should miss the accustomed sequence of content?
All times are good; life's morning let us sing,

Its sunny noon, high noon, the whole world's
pause,
Nor less that sweet decline which ends in eve.
Life were monotonous with its morning hours,
Came not the hurrying years to shift our
mood,
Unfold an altered heaven and spread its glow
O'er the changed landscape of time's afternoon.

THE TRUMPETER

I BLEW, I blew, the trumpet loudly sounding;
I blew, I blew, the heart within me bounding;
The world was fresh and fair, yet dark with
wrong,
And men stood forth to conquer at the song
I blew, I blew, I blew.

The field is won; the minstrels loud are crying,
And all the world is peace; and I am dying.
Yet this forgotten life was not in vain;
Enough if I alone recall the strain
I blew, I blew, I blew.

SONNET TO DUTY

Θεός τις ἔστ' ἐν ἡμίν.
EURIPIDES (*Fragm.*).

LIGHT of dim mornings; shield from heat and cold;
Balm for all ailments; substitute for praise;
Comrade of those who plod in lonely ways
(Ways that grow lonelier as the years wax old);
Tonic for fears; check to the over-bold;
Nurse, whose calm hand its strong restriction lays,
Kind but resistless, on our wayward days;
Mart, where high wisdom at vast price is sold;
Gardener, whose touch bids the rose-petals fall,
The thorns endure; surgeon, who human hearts
Searchest with probes, though the death-wound be given;
Spell that knits friends, but yearning lovers parts;
Tyrant relentless o'er our blisses all;—
Oh, can it be, thine other name is Heaven?

A JAR OF ROSE-LEAVES

Myriad roses fade unheeded,
Yet no note of grief is needed;
When the ruder breezes tear them,
Sung or songless, we can spare them.
But the choicest petals are
Shrined in some deep Orient jar,
Rich without and sweet within,
Where we cast the rose-leaves in.

Life has jars of costlier price
Framed to hold our memories.
There we treasure baby smiles,
Boyish exploits, girlish wiles,
All that made our early days
Sweeter than these trodden ways
Where the Fates our fortunes spin.
Memory, toss the rose-leaves in!

What the jar holds, that shall stay;
Time steals all the rest away.
Cast in love's first stolen word,
Bliss when uttered, bliss when heard;
Maiden's looks of shy surprise;
Glances from a hero's eyes;
Palms we risked our souls to win:
Memory, fling the rose-leaves in!

Now more sombre and more slow
Let the incantation grow!
Cast in shreds of rapture brief,
Subtle links 'twixt hope and grief;
Vagrant fancy's dangerous toys;
Covert dreams, narcotic joys
Flavored with the taste of sin:
Memory, pour the rose-leaves in!

Quit that borderland of pain!
Cast in thoughts of nobler vein,
Magic gifts of human breath,
Mysteries of birth and death.
What if all this web of change
But prepare for scenes more strange;
If to die be to begin?
Memory, heap the rose-leaves in!

SUB PONDERE CRESCIT

Can this be he, whose morning footstep trod
O'er the green earth as in a regal home?
Whose voice rang out beneath the skyey dome
Like the high utterance of a youthful god?
Now with wan looks and eyes that seek the sod,
Restless and purposeless as ocean foam,
Across the twilight fields I see him roam
With shoulders bowed, as shrinking from the rod.

Oh lift the old-time light within thine eyes!
Set free the pristine passion from thy tongue!
Strength grows with burdens; make an end of sighs.
Let thy thoughts soar again their mates among,
And as yon oriole's eager matins rise,
Abroad once more be thy strong anthem flung!

THE PLAYMATE HOURS

Dawn lingers silent in the shade of night,
Till on the gloaming Baby's laughter rings.
Then smiling Day awakes, and open flings
Her golden doors, to speed the shining flight
Of restless hours, gay children of the light.
Each eager playfellow to Baby brings
Some separate gift, — a flitting bird that sings
With her; a waving branch of berries bright;
A heap of rustling leaves; each trifle cheers
This joyous little life but just begun.
No weary hour to her brings sighs or tears;
And when the shadows warn the loitering sun,
With blossoms in her hands, untouched by fears,
She softly falls asleep, and day is done.

M. T. H.

THE BABY SORCERESS

Our baby sits beneath the tall elm-trees,
A wreath of tangled ribbons in her hands;
She twines and twists the many-colored strands,
A little sorceress, weaving destinies.
Now the pure white she grasps; now naught can please
But strips of crimson, lurid as the brands
From passion's fires, or yellow, like the sands
That lend soft setting to the azure seas.
And so with sweet incessant toil she fills
A summer hour, still following fancies new,
Till through my heart a sudden terror thrills
Lest, as she weaves, her aimless choice prove true.
Thank God, our fates proceed not from our wills!
The Power that spins the thread shall blend the hue.

HEIRS OF TIME

INSCRIBED TO EDWARD BELLAMY

"Aucun homme ne peut aliéner sa souveraineté, parcequ'il ne peut abdiquer sa nature ou cesser d' être homme; et de la souveraineté de chaque individu naît, dans la société, la souveraineté collective de tous ou la souveraineté du peuple, également inaliénable." — ABBE DE LA MENNAIS, *Le Livre du Peuple* (1837).

FROM street and square, from hill and glen
Of this vast world beyond my door,
I hear the tread of marching men,
The patient armies of the poor.

The halo of the city's lamps
Hangs, a vast torchlight, in the air;
I watch it through the evening damps:
The masters of the world are there.

Not ermine-clad or clothed in state,
Their title-deeds not yet made plain;
But waking early, toiling late,
The heirs of all the earth remain.

Some day, by laws as fixed and fair
As guide the planets in their sweep,
The children of each outcast heir
The harvest-fruits of time shall reap.

The peasant brain shall yet be wise,
The untamed pulse grow calm and still;

The blind shall see, the lowly rise,
And work in peace Time's wondrous will.

Some day, without a trumpet's call,
This news will o'er the world be blown :
" The heritage comes back to all !
The myriad monarchs take their own ! "

SIXTY AND SIX: OR A FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

" Fons, delicium domus."
MARTIAL.

Joy of the morning,
Darling of dawning,
Blithe little, lithe little daughter of mine !
While with thee ranging
Sure I 'm exchanging
Sixty of my years for six years like thine.
Wings cannot vie with thee,
Lightly I fly with thee
Gay as the thistle-down over the lea.
Life is all magic,
Comic or tragic,
Played as thou playest it daily with me.

Floating and ringing,
Thy merry singing
Comes when the light comes, like that of the birds.

List to the play of it!
That is the way of it;
All 's in the music and naught in the words.
Glad or grief-laden,
Schubert or Haydn,
Ballad of Erin or merry Scotch lay;
Like an evangel,
Some baby-angel
Brought from sky-nursery stealing away.

Surely I know it,
Artist nor poet
Guesses my treasure of jubilant hours.
Sorrows, what are they?
Nearer or far, they
Vanish in sunshine, like dew from the flowers.
Years, I am glad of them;
Would that I had of them
More and yet more, while thus mingled with thine.
Age, I make light of it,
Fear not the sight of it,
Time 's but our playmate, whose toys are divine.

"SINCE CLEOPATRA DIED"

> "Since Cleopatra died,
> I have lived in such dishonor that the gods
> Detest my baseness."

"Since Cleopatra died!" Long years are past,
In Antony's fancy, since the deed was done.
Love counts its epochs, not from sun to sun,
But by the heart-throb. Mercilessly fast
Time has swept onward since she looked her last
On life, a queen. For him the sands have run
Whole ages through their glass, and kings have won
And lost their empires o'er earth's surface vast
Since Cleopatra died. Ah! Love and Pain
Make their own measure of all things that be.
No clock's slow ticking marks their deathless strain;
The life they own is not the life we see;
Love's single moment is eternity:
Eternity, a thought in Shakespeare's brain.

THE SOUL OF A BUTTERFLY

Over the field where the brown quails whistle,
Over the ferns where the rabbits lie,
Floats the tremulous down of a thistle.
Is it the soul of a butterfly?

See! how they scatter and then assemble;
  Filling the air while the blossoms fade, —
Delicate atoms, that whirl and tremble
  In the slanting sunlight that skirts the glade.

There goes the summer's inconstant lover,
  Drifting and wandering, faint and far;
Only bewailed by the upland plover,
  Watched by only the twilight star.

Come next August, when thistles blossom,
  See how each is alive with wings!
Butterflies seek their souls in its bosom,
  Changed thenceforth to immortal things.

DECORATION

"Manibus O date lilia plenis."

Mid the flower-wreathed tombs I stand
Bearing lilies in my hand.
Comrades! in what soldier-grave
Sleeps the bravest of the brave?

Is it he who sank to rest
With his colors round his breast?
Friendship makes his tomb a shrine;
Garlands veil it: ask not mine.

One low grave, yon trees beneath,
Bears no roses, wears no wreath;
Yet no heart more high and warm
Ever dared the battle-storm,

Never gleamed a prouder eye
In the front of victory,
Never foot had firmer tread
On the field where hope lay dead,

Than are hid within this tomb
Where the untended grasses bloom,
And no stone, with feigned distress,
Mocks the sacred loneliness.

Youth and beauty, dauntless will,
Dreams that life could ne'er fulfil,
Here lie buried; here in peace
Wrongs and woes have found release.

Turning from my comrades' eyes,
Kneeling where a woman lies,
I strew lilies on the grave
Of the bravest of the brave.

"THE SNOWING OF THE PINES"

Softer than silence, stiller than still air,
Float down from high pine boughs the slender leaves.
The forest floor its annual boon receives
That comes like snowfall, tireless, tranquil, fair.
Gently they glide, gently they clothe the bare
Old rocks with grace. Their fall a mantle weaves
Of paler yellow than autumnal sheaves
Or those strange blossoms the witch-hazels wear.
Athwart long aisles the sunbeams pierce their way;
High up, the crows are gathering for the night;
The delicate needles fill the air; the jay
Takes through their golden mist his radiant flight;
They fall and fall, till at November's close
The snowflakes drop as lightly — snows on snows.

THE LESSON OF THE LEAVES

O THOU who bearest on thy thoughtful face
The wearied calm that follows after grief,
See how the autumn guides each loosened leaf
To sure repose in its own sheltered place.
Ah, not forever whirl they in the race
Of wild forlornness round the gathered sheaf,
Or hurrying onward in a rapture brief
Spin o'er the moorlands into trackless space.
Some hollow captures each; some sheltering wall
Arrests the wanderer on its aimless way;
The autumn's pensive beauty needs them all,
And winter finds them warm, though sere and gray.
They nurse young blossoms for the spring's sweet call,
And shield new leaflets for the burst of May.

VESTIS ANGELICA

[Set to music by Francis Boott, Esq.]

It was a custom of the early English church for pious laymen to be carried in the hour of death to some monastery, that they might be clothed in the habit of the religious order, and might die amid the prayers of the brotherhood. The garment thus assumed was known as the *Vestis Angelica*. See MORONI, *Dizionario di Erudizione Storico-Ecclesiastica*, ii. 78; xcvi. 212.

O GATHER, gather! Stand
Round her on either hand!
O shining angel-band
More pure than priest!
A garment white and whole
Weave for this passing soul,
Whose earthly joy and dole
Have almost ceased.

Weave it of mothers' prayers,
Of sacred thoughts and cares,
Of peace beneath gray hairs,
Of hallowed pain;
Weave it of vanished tears,
Of childlike hopes and fears,
Of joys, by saintly years
Washed free from stain.

Weave it of happy hours,
Of smiles and summer flowers,

Of passing sunlit showers,
Of acts of love;
Of footsteps that did go
Amid life's work and woe, —
Her eyes still fixed below,
Her thoughts above.

Then as those eyes grow dim
Chant we her best-loved hymn,
While from yon church-tower's brim
A soft chime swells.
Her freed soul floats in bliss
To unseen worlds from this,
Nor knows in which it is
She hears the bells.

TO MY SHADOW

A MUTE companion at my side
Paces and plods, the whole day long,
Accepts the measure of my stride,
Yet gives no cheer by word or song.

More close than any doggish friend,
Not ranging far and wide, like him,
He goes where'er my footsteps tend,
Nor shrinks for fear of life or limb.

I do not know when first we met,
But till each day's bright hours are done

This grave and speechless silhouette
Keeps me betwixt him and the sun.

They say he knew me when a child;
Born with my birth, he dies with me;
Not once from his long task beguiled,
Though sin or shame bid others flee.

What if, when all this world of men
Shall melt and fade and pass away,
This deathless sprite should rise again
And be himself my Judgment Day?

TWO VOYAGERS

When first I mark upon my child's clear brow
Thought's wrestling shadows their new struggle keep,
Read my own conflicts in her questions deep,
My own remorse in her repentant vow,
My own vast ignorance in her "Why?" and "How?"
When my precautions only serve to heap
New burdens, and my cares her needs o'erleap,
Then to her separate destiny I bow.
So seem we like two ships, that side by side,
Older and younger, breast the same rough main
Bound for one port, whatever winds betide,

In solemn interchange of joy or pain.
I may not hold thee back. Though skies be dark,
Put forth upon the seas, O priceless bark!

SEA-GULLS AT FRESH POND

O LAKE of boyish dreams! I linger round
Thy calm, clear waters and thine altered shores
Till thought brings back the plash of childhood's oars, —
Long hid in memory's depths, a vanished sound.
Alone unchanged, the sea-birds yet are found
Far floating on thy wave by threes and fours,
Or grouped in hundreds, while a white gull soars,
Safe, beyond gunshot of the hostile ground.
I am no nearer to those joyous birds
Than when, long since, I watched them as a child;
Nor am I nearer to that flock more wild,
Most shy and vague of all elusive things,
My unattainable thoughts, unreached by words.
I see the flight, but never touch the wings.

THE DYING HOUSE

SHE is dead ; her house is dying ;
Round its long-deserted door,
From the hillside and the moor,
Swell the autumn breezes sighing.
Closer to its windows press
Pine-tree boughs in mute caress ;
Wind-sown seeds in silence come,
Root, and grow, and bud, and bloom ;
Year by year, kind Nature's grace
Wraps and shields her dwelling-place.
She who loved all things that grew,
Talked with every bird that flew,
Brought each creature to her feet
With persuasive accents sweet, —
Now her voice is hushed and gone,
Yet the birds and bees keep on.

Oh the joy, the love, the glee,
Sheltered once by that roof-tree !
Song and dance and serenade,
Joyous jest by maskers played ;
Passionate whispers on the stairs,
Hopes unspoken, voiceless prayers ;
Greetings that repressed love's theme,
Partings that renewed its dream ;
All the blisses, all the woes,

Youth's brief hour of springtime knows, —
All have died into the past.
Perish too the house at last!

Vagrant children come and go
'Neath the windows, murmuring low;
Peering with impatient eye
For a ghostly mystery.
Some a fabled secret tell,
Others touch the soundless bell,
Then with hurrying step retreat
From the echo of their feet.
Or perchance there wander near
Guests who once held revel here:
Some live o'er again the days
Of their love's first stolen gaze;
Or some sad soul, looking in,
Calls back hours of blight or sin,
Glad if her mute life may share
In the sheltering silence there.
Oh, what cheeks might blanch with fears,
Had walls tongues, as they have ears!

Silent house with close-locked doors,
Ghosts and memories haunt thy floors!
Not a web of circumstance
Woven here into romance
E'er can perish; many a thread
Must survive when thou art dead.

Children's children shall not know
How their doom of joy or woe
Was determined ere their birth,
'Neath this roof that droops to earth,
By some love-tie here create,
Or hereditary hate,
Or some glance whose bliss or strife
Was the climax of a life,
Though its last dumb witness falls
With the crumbling of these walls.

A SONG OF DAYS

O RADIANT summer day,
Whose air, sweet air, steals on from flower to flower!
Couldst thou not yield one hour
When the glad heart says, "This alone is May"?

O passionate earthly love,
Whose tremulous pulse beats on to life's best boon!
Couldst thou not give one noon,
One noon of noons, all other bliss above?

O solemn human life,
Whose nobler longings bid all conflict cease!

Grant us one day's deep peace
Beyond the utmost rumor of all strife.

For if no joy can stay,
Let it at least yield one consummate bloom,
Or else there is no room
To find delight in love, or life, or May.

TREASURE IN HEAVEN

If messengers we fear
  Should hither come to-day,
  And beckon me away
From all that earth holds dear;

And I should trembling turn
  And cling to glowing life,
  Yet in the fiercest strife
Feel heart and reason burn;

Then look into love's face,
  And see with anguish wild
  Our rosy little child
With all her baby grace,

And stretch my feeble hand
  To keep the darling near, —
  My fainting soul would hear
A voice from spirit-land.

That voice would set me free,
With joy my pulses thrill,
"Mamma, I need you still!
Have you forgotten me?"

M. T. H.

1883.

BENEATH THE VIOLETS

SAFE 'neath the violets
Rests the baby form;
Every leaf that springtime sets
Shields it from the storm.
Peace to all vain regrets
Mid this sunshine warm!

Shadows come and shadows go
O'er the meadows wide;
Twice each day, to and fro,
Steals the river-tide;
Each morn with sunrise-glow
Gilds the green hillside.

Peace that no sorrow frets
In our souls arise!
Over all our wild regrets
Arching, like the skies;
While safe 'neath the violets
Sleep the violet eyes.

1880.

"THE KNOCK ALPHABET"

[Mr. Kennan tells us that Russian prisoners converse with each other in a complex alphabet, indicated by knocking on the walls of their cells.]

LIKE prisoners, each within his own deep cell,
We mortals talk together through a wall.
"Was that low note indeed my brother's call?
Or but a distant water-drop which fell?"
Yet to the straining ear each sound can tell
Some woe that might the bravest heart appal,
Or some high hope that triumphs over all:
"Brother, I die to-morrow." "Peace!"
"All 's well!"
Oh, could we once see fully, face to face,
But one of these our mates, — once speak aloud,
Once meet him, heart to heart, in strong embrace, —
How would our days be glad, our hopes be proud!
Perchance that wall is Life; and life being done,
Death may unite these sundered cells in one.

THE REED IMMORTAL

INSCRIBED TO THE BOSTON PAPYRUS CLUB

[Pliny tells us that the Egyptians regarded the papyrus as an emblem of immortality.]

Reed of the stagnant waters,
Far in the Eastern lands,
Rearing thy peaceful daughters
In sight of the storied sands!
Armies and fleets defying
Have swept by that quiet spot,
But thine is the life undying,
Theirs is the tale forgot.

The legions of Alexander
Are scattered and gone and fled,
And the queen who ruled commander
Over Antony is dead;
The marching armies of Cyrus
Have vanished in earth again,
And only the frail papyrus
Still reigns o'er the sons of men.

Papyrus! O reed immortal,
Survivor of all renown!
Thou heed'st not the solemn portal
Where heroes and kings go down.

The monarchs of generations
Have died into dust away;
O reed that outlivest nations,
Be our symbol of strength to-day!

DAME CRAIGIE

[Lines read at the Longfellow Memorial Reading, Cambridge, February 27, 1888.]

In childish Cambridge days, now long ago,
When pacing schoolward in the morning hours,
I passed the stately homes of Tory Row
And paused to see Dame Craigie tend her flowers.

Framed in the elm-tree boughs before her door
The old escutcheon of our town was seen, —
Canker-worms *pendent*, yellowing leaves in *or*,
School-boys *regardant*, on a field grass-green.

Dame Craigie, with Spinoza in her hand,
Was once heard murmuring to the insect crew,
"I will not harm you, little restless band!
For what are mortal men but worms, like you?"

The trees are gone: Dame Craigie too is gone,
Her tongue long silent, and her turban furled;
Yet 'neath her roof thought's silk-worms still spun on,
Whose sumptuous fabric clothed a barren world.

GIFTS

A FLAWLESS pearl, snatched from an ocean cave,
Remote from light or air,
And by the mad caress of stormy wave
Made but more pure and fair;

A diamond, wrested from earth's hidden zone,
To whose recesses deep
It clung, and bravely flashed a light that shone
Where dusky shadows creep;

A sapphire, in whose heart the tender rays
Of summer skies had met;
A ruby, glowing with the ardent blaze
Of suns that never set, —

These priceless jewels shone, one happy day,
On my bewildered sight:

"We bring from earth, sea, sky," they seemed
to say,
"Love's richness and delight."

"For me?" I trembling cried. "Thou need'st
not dread,"
Sang heavenly voices sweet;
And unseen hands placed on my lowly head
This crown, for angels meet.

M. T. H.

DWELLING-PLACES

WHERE is thy home, O little fair head,
With thy sunny hair, on earth's clouded way?
"On my lover's breast; and I take my rest,
And I know no terror by night or day."

Where is thy home, O little fair heart,
With thy joyous hopes in life's shadows dim?
"In my lover's heart; and we never part,
For he carries me round the world with him."

Where is thy home, O little fair soul,
So brave 'mid the old world's sorrow and care?
"My home is in heaven. To me 't is given
To win my lover to meet me there."

TO THE MEMORY OF H. H.

O SOUL of fire within a woman's clay!
Lifting with slender hands a race's wrong,
Whose mute appeal hushed all thine early song,
And taught thy passionate heart the loftier way, —
What shall thy place be in the realm of day?
What disembodied world can hold thee long,
Binding thy turbulent pulse with spell more strong?
Dwell'st thou, with wit and jest, where poets may,
Or with ethereal women — born of air
And poet's dreams — dost live in ecstasy,
Teach new love-thoughts to Shakespeare's Juliet fair,
New moods to Cleopatra? Then, set free,
The woes of Shelley's Helen thou dost share,
Or weep with poor Rossetti's Rose Mary.

VENUS MULTIFORMIS

THREE men on a broken deck-plank,
With the reef and its roar ahead,
Floated on, through a fair June morning,
To a doom that was sure and dread.

Said one, "My years have been wasted
On a woman's terrible charms;
But oh! to see death draw near me,
And to die outside of her arms!"

Said another, "Through surge and through tempest
My eyes are fixed on her face;
I forget the tumult of ocean
In the joy of her last embrace."

Said the third, "I can die unflinching
Wherever my fortune lies;
But oh! her endless bereavement,
And the rivers of tears from her eyes!"

While the woman they all had worshipped
Walked out from the gray church-door
Amid smiles and greetings and music,
And followed by prayers of the poor.

TO JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

At dawn of manhood came a voice to me
That said to startled conscience, "Sleep no more!"
Like some loud cry that peals from door to door
It roused a generation; and I see,

Now looking back through years of memory,
That all of school or college, all the lore
Of worldly maxims, all the statesman's store,
Were naught beside that voice's mastery.
If any good to me or from me came
Through life, and if no influence less divine
Has quite usurped the place of duty's flame;
If aught rose worthy in this heart of mine,
Aught that, viewed backward, wears no shade of shame, —
Bless thee, old friend! for that high call was thine.

CAMBRIDGE, December 17, 1887.

WAITING FOR THE BUGLE

[Read before the Grand Army Post (56) of veteran soldiers, at Cambridge, Mass., May 25, 1888. Set to music by Francis Boott, Esq.]

WE wait for the bugle; the night-dews are cold,
The limbs of the soldiers feel jaded and old,
The field of our bivouac is windy and bare,
There is lead in our joints, there is frost in our hair,
The future is veiled and its fortunes unknown,
As we lie with hushed breath till the bugle is blown.

At the sound of that bugle each comrade shall spring
Like an arrow released from the strain of the string;
The courage, the impulse of youth shall come back
To banish the chill of the drear bivouac,
And sorrows and losses and cares fade away
When that life-giving signal proclaims the new day.

Though the bivouac of age may put ice in our veins,
And no fibre of steel in our sinew remains;
Though the comrades of yesterday's march are not here,
And the sunlight seems pale and the branches are sere, —
Though the sound of our cheering dies down to a moan,
We shall find our lost youth when the bugle is blown.

ASTRA CASTRA

SOMEWHERE betwixt me and the farthest star,
Or else beyond all worlds, all space, all thought,

Dwells that freed spirit, now transformed and taught
To move in orbits where the immortals are.
Does she rejoice or mourn? Perchance from far
Some earthly errand she but now has sought,
By instantaneous ways among us brought,
Ways to which night and distance yield no bar.
Could we but reach and touch that wayward will
On earth so hard to touch, would she be found
Controlled or yet impetuous, free or bound,
Tameless as ocean, or serene and still?
If in her heart one eager impulse stirs,
Could heaven itself calm that wild mood of hers?

MEMORIAL ODE

[Read before the Grand Army Posts of Boston, Mass., on Memorial Day, May 30, 1881, by Mr. George Riddle.]

I.

Joy to the three-hilled city! — for each year
Heals something of the grief this day records;
Each year the plaintive lay
Sounds yet more far away,

And strains of triumph suit memorial words.
The old-time pang becomes a thrill of joy;
Again we turn the page
Of our heroic age,
And read anew the tale of every patriot boy.
A modest courage was their simple wont,
The dauntless youths who grew to manhood here:
Putnam and Savage, Perkins and Revere.
It needs no helmet's gleam,
No armor's glittering beam,
No feudal imagery of shield or spear
To gild the gallant deeds that roused us then, —
When Cass fell dying in the battle's front,
And Shaw's fair head lay 'mid his dusky men.

II.

All o'er the tranquil land
On this Memorial Day,
Coming from near and far,
Men gather in the mimic guise of war.
They bear no polished steel,
Yet by the elbow's touch they march, they wheel,
Or side by side they stand.
They now are peaceful men, fair Order's sons;
But as they halt in motionless array,
Or bow their heads to pray,
Into their dream intrudes

The swift sharp crack of rifle-shots in woods;
Into their memory swells
The trumpet's call, the screaming of the shells;
And ever and anon they seem to hear
The far-off thunder of besieging guns, —
All sounds of bygone war, all memories of the ear.

III.

A little while it seems
Since those were daily thoughts which now are dreams.
A little while is gone
Since, the last battle fought, the victory won,
We saw sweet Peace come back with all her charms,
And watched a million men lay down their arms.
But at this morning's call
We bridge the interval;
And yet once more, with no regretful tears,
Live back again, though now men's blood be cooled,
Through the long vista of the fading years
To days when Sumner spoke, and Andrew ruled.

IV.

Courage is first and last of what we need
To mould a nation for triumphal sway:

All else is empty air,
A promise vainly fair,
Like the bright beauty of the ocean spray
Tossed up toward heaven, but never reaching there.
Not in the past, but in the future, we
Must seek the mastery
Of fate and fortune, thought and word and deed.
Gone, gone for aye, the little Puritan homes;
Gone the beleaguered town, from out whose spires
Flashed forth the warning fires
Telling the Cambridge rustics, "Percy comes!"
And gone those later days of grief and shame
When slavery changed our court-house to a jail,
And blood-drops stained its threshold. Now we hail,
After the long affray,
A time of calmer order, wider aim,
More mingled races, manhood's larger frame,
A city's broader sweep, the Boston of to-day.

V.

They say our city's star begins to wane,
Our heroes pass away, our poets die,
Our passionate ardors mount no more so high.
'T is but an old alarm, the affright of wealth,
The cowardice of culture, wasted pain!

Freedom is hope and health!
The sea on which yon ocean steamers ride
Is the same sea that rocked the shallops frail
Of the bold Pilgrims; yonder is its tide,
And here are we, their sons; it grows not pale,
Nor we who walk its borders. Never fear!
Courage and truth are all!
Trust in the great hereafter, and whene'er
In some high hour of need,
That tests the heroic breed,
The Boston of the future sounds its call,
Bartletts and Lowells yet shall answer, "Here!"

SERENADE BY THE SEA

[Set to music by M. Albert Pégou.]

O'ER the ocean vague and wide
Sleep comes with the coming tide.
Breezes lull my lady fair,
Cool her eyelids, soothe her hair,
While the murmuring surges seem
To float her through a world of dream.

Shadowy sloops are gliding in
Safe the harbor-bar within.
Silently each phantom pale
Drops the anchor, furls the sail.

She, meanwhile, remote from me
Drifts on sleep's unfathomed sea.

So may every dream of ill
Find its anchorage, and be still;
Sorrow furl its sails and cease
In this midnight realm of peace;
And each wandering thought find rest
In the haven of her breast.

THE FROZEN CASCADE

THE BRIDE OF THE ROCK

In beauty perfected, with lavish grace,
She casts herself about his rugged form,
With all her vesture on, of snowy white,
Nor left one pendant out, one dropping pearl.
Could she be fairer? Through her inmost veins
The warm sun searches, as for some weak spot;
But with a pride refined she smileth back:
"I gave myself in beauty to this Rock;
Ancient he is, and reverend and strong;
And I will fringe him with my snowy arms,
And lay my white cheek on his dark gray brow,
Nor ever melt for all thy beaming eyes!"

S. L. H.

THE THINGS I MISS

An easy thing, O Power Divine,
To thank Thee for these gifts of Thine!
For summer's sunshine, winter's snow,
For hearts that kindle, thoughts that glow.
But when shall I attain to this, —
To thank Thee for the things I miss?

For all young Fancy's early gleams,
The dreamed-of joys that still are dreams,
Hopes unfulfilled, and pleasures known
Through others' fortunes, not my own,
And blessings seen that are not given,
And never will be, this side heaven.

Had I too shared the joys I see,
Would there have been a heaven for me?
Could I have felt Thy presence near,
Had I possessed what I held dear?
My deepest fortune, highest bliss,
Have grown perchance from things I miss.

Sometimes there comes an hour of calm;
Grief turns to blessing, pain to balm;
A Power that works above my will
Still leads me onward, upward still.
And then my heart attains to this, —
To thank Thee for the things I miss.

1870.

AN EGYPTIAN BANQUET

A CROWDED life, where joy perennial starts;
The boy's pulse beating 'mid experience sage;
Wild thirst for action, time could ne'er assuage;
Countless sad secrets, learned from weary hearts;
New thresholds gained, as each full hour departs;
Long years read singly, each an opened page;
Love's blissful dreams and friendship's priceless gage;
A name grown famous through the streets and marts;
Knowledge advancing; thoughts that climb and climb;
Aims that expand; new pinions that unfurl;
Age that outstrips all promise of its prime;
Hopes which their prayers at utmost heaven hurl, —
Till in an instant, in a point of time,
Death, the Egyptian, melts and drinks the pearl.

AN AMERICAN STONEHENGE

FAR up on these abandoned mountain farms
Now drifting back to forest wilds again,
The long, gray walls extend their clasping arms,
Pathetic monuments of vanished men.

Serpents in stone, they wind o'er hill and dell
'Mid orchards long deserted, fields unshorn, —
The crumbling fragments resting where they fell
Forgotten, worthless to a race new-born.

Nearer than stones of storied Saxon name
These speechless relics to our hearts should come.
No toiler for a priest's or monarch's fame,
This farmer lived and died to shape a home.

What days of lonely toil he undertook!
What years of iron labor! and for what?
To yield the chipmunk one more secret nook,
The gliding snake one more sequestered spot.

So little time on earth; so much to do;
Yet all that waste of weary, toil-worn hands!
Life came and went; the patient task is through;
The men are gone; the idle structure stands.

THE HORIZON LINE

We wander wide o'er earth's remotest lands,
Yet never reach those wondrous realms that are
Bounded in childhood by thy shadowy bar,
That 'twixt us and our fortunes ever stands.
Though Cæsar tread the globe with conquering bands
He cannot touch thine outline faint and far
That flies before him; and the heaven's least star
Is not more safe from contact of his hands.
O spell forever vague and hovering,
Thou offerest endless balm for jaded eyes,
Dull with achievement! Man until he dies
Thy magic distance can no nearer bring, —
Alluring, soft, elusive, still it lies
On the vast earth one inaccessible thing.

THE FAIRY COURSERS

Floating afar upon the lake's calm bosom,
Whirled in blissful myriads, dart the dragonflies;
Mingled in their mazes with bird and bee and blossom
They sink with the rainclouds or on the breezes rise.

Little blue phantom around my dory flitting
Or poised in peaceful silence on the loom of my oar,
Heaven has marked out for thee a labor that is fitting
Though eyes dim and human may miss thy secret lore.

Fairies that have fled from the grasp of earthly forces,
Shielded from the view of us mortals dimly-eyed,
These are their chariots, these their wingèd horses,
Safe on these coursers the vanished fairies ride.

RABIAH'S DEFENCE[1]

Go not away from us; stay, O Rabiah, son of Mukàd!
Soft may the clouds of dawn spread dew on thy grassy grave,
Rabiah, the long-locked boy, who guardedst thy women, dead.

[1] The tradition may be found in Lyall's *Ancient Arabian Poetry*, page 56. The measure is an imitation of the Arabic Tawil.

Fast rode the fleeing band, straight for the pass al-Khadìd,
Mother and daughters, wives, and Rabiah the only man,
Fleeing for honor and life through lands of a vengeful tribe.
Sudden a moving cloud came swift o'er the hill behind.
Dark rode the men of Sulaim, and Death rode dark in their midst.
"Save us!" the mother cried. "O boy, thou must fight alone!"
"Hasten, ride!" he said, calm. "I only draw rein till a wind
Blowing this dust away gives place to look for the foe."
His sisters moaned, "He deserts!" "Have you known it?" Rabiah cried.
The women rode and rode. When the dust cleared, his arrows sprang
Straight at the following foe: the pride of their host went down.
Swift turned Rabiah his mare, and o'ertook his retreating kin,
Halted and faced again as the men of Sulaim closed round.
Ever his mother called: "Charge thou once more, O son!
Keep off their hands from us all; meet them with shaft on shaft."

Still he kept facing, and aimed till every arrow was gone ;
Still rode the women on, — by sunset the pass was near.
Still the black horses came, and Rabiah drew his sword,
Checked for the last time there, and face to face with a clan.

Then rode Nubaishah up, son of the old Habìb,
Thrust young Rabiah through, and cried aloud, "He is slain !
Look at the blood on my lance !" Said Rabiah only, "A lie !"
Turned and galloped once more, and faced when he reached al-Khadìd.
There had the women paused, to enter the pass one by one.
"Mother," he cried, "give me drink !" She answered, "Drink, thou art dead,
Leaving thy women slaves. First save thou thy women, then die !"
"Bind up my wound," he said ; she bound with her veil. He sang,
"I was a hawk that drove the tumult of frightened birds,
Diving deep with my blows, before and again behind."

Then she said, "Smite again!" and he, where the pass turns in,
Sat upright on his steed, barring the road once more.
Then drew the death-chill on; he leaned his head on his spear,
Dim in the twilight there, with the shadows darkening down.
Never a dog of Sulaim came up, but they watched and watched.
The mare moved never a hoof; the rider was still as she;
Till sudden Nubaishah shrieked, "His head droops down on his neck!
He is dead, I tell you, dead! Shoot one true shaft at his mare!"
The mare started, she sprang; and Rabiah fell, stone cold.
Far and away through the pass the women were safe in their homes.

Then up rode a man of Sulaim, struck Rabiah hard with his spear,
Saying, "Thou Pride of God, thou alone of mortals wast brave.
Never a man of our tribe but would for his women die;
Never before lived one who guarded them yet, though dead!"

THE BALTIMORE ORIOLE

A WINGED sunbeam flashes through the trees
And whistles thrice, as if the air took voice
And all the embodied springtime cried, "Rejoice!"
The jocund notes enchant the morning breeze,
Now here, now there, still shifting as they please, —
"O fear not! all is well since I am here."
The blind, the imprisoned, know that cry of cheer,
And grief must yield to joy's blithe litanies.

A myriad blossoms cluster round his feet,
And all the air is full of heaven-sent things.
Hark! once again the jubilant treble rings,
Swift as that hurrying flight, though wild and sweet.
What room is left for meanness or deceit
Or fear, in planets where the oriole sings?

THE SLEEPING-CAR

Cælum non animum mutant.

We lie with senses lulled and still
'Twixt dream and thought, 'twixt night and day,
While smoke and steam their office fill
To bear our prostrate forms away.

The stars, the clouds, the mountains, all
Glide by us through the midnight deep;
The names of slumbering cities fall
Like feathers from the wings of sleep.

Till at the last, in morning light,
Beneath an alien sky we stand;
Vast spaces traversed in a night;
Another clime, another land.

NEMESIS

The stern processional ascends the steep
Of high Olympus, and the kings of song
With ceaseless note the antiphony prolong
Of those who robe in sackcloth. Sad and deep
Their voices who the unchecked remembrance keep

Of wandering passion. Fearlessly and strong
Did Shakespeare wail the expense of spirit's wrong,
And Burns the woe that poppied pleasures reap.

Easier for human hearts to bear a pain
Than to forego the rapture that they miss.
Men may repent, but how can they forget?
Sin's retribution dwells in longings vain, —
Not in remorse, but in the wild regret
And helpless yearning for disastrous bliss.

MAB'S PONIES

Far off among our pine-clad hills,
When night is on the forest glade,
Amid the shadowy rocks and rills
There roams a tinkling cavalcade.

We sometimes hear, half waked from sleep,
A nearer hoof, a phantom neigh,
Till breezes from Monadnock sweep
And bear the magic sounds away.

Their home is in the dusky woods;
Their tramp is on the midnight sod;
No eye descries their solitudes,
The uplands where their feet have trod.

Above the works of farmers dead,
Their fields untilled, their harvests gone,
Romance resumes its airy tread
Within the haunts of Oberon.

THE MONK OF LA TRAPPE

THAT silent man, who gazes on the waves,
Clad in the garb which severs him from life
And bars all hope of home or child or wife,
Once knew the bliss that thrills, the grief that raves.
Kings were his friends, and queens his meek-voiced slaves.
Each crowded day with passionate impulse rife,
He tasted hope, fear, anguish, longing, strife;
Remorse that hates, yet seeks, condemns, yet craves.
Perhaps some dream, as sinks yon evening sun,
Leads back the dramas of his stormy prime, —
Beauty embraced, foes quelled, ambitions won, —
A tangled web of courage and of crime.
Those years, long wholly vanished, throb for him
Like pangs which haunt the amputated limb.

ODE TO A BUTTERFLY

Thou spark of life that wavest wings of gold,
Thou songless wanderer 'mid the songful birds,
With Nature's secrets in thy tints unrolled
Through gorgeous cipher, past the reach of words,
Yet dear to every child
In glad pursuit beguiled,
Living his unspoiled days 'mid flowers and flocks and herds!

Thou wingèd blossom, liberated thing,
What secret tie binds thee to other flowers,
Still held within the garden's fostering?
Will they too soar with the completed hours,
Take flight, and be like thee
Irrevocably free,
Hovering at will o'er their parental bowers?

Or is thy lustre drawn from heavenly hues, —
A sumptuous drifting fragment of the sky,
Caught when the sunset its last glance imbues
With sudden splendor, and the treetops high
Grasp that swift blazonry,
Then lend those tints to thee,
On thee to float a few short hours, and die?

Birds have their nests; they rear their eager
young,
And flit on errands all the livelong day;
Each field-mouse keeps the homestead whence
it sprung;
But thou art Nature's freeman, — free to stray
Unfettered through the wood
Seeking thine airy food,
The sweetness spiced on every blossomed spray.

The garden one wide banquet spreads for thee,
O daintiest reveller of the joyous earth!
One drop of honey gives satiety:
A second draught would drug thee past all
mirth.
Thy feast no orgy shows;
Thy calm eyes never close,
Thou soberest sprite to which the sun gives
birth.

And yet the soul of man upon thy wings
Forever soars in aspiration; thou
His emblem of the new career that springs
When death's arrest bids all his spirit bow.
He seeks his hope in thee
Of immortality.
Symbol of life, me with such faith endow!

THE TWO LESSONS

" Disce, puer, virtutem ex me, verumque laborem ;
Fortunam ex aliis." — Æneas to Ascanius (*Æneid*, xii. 435).

LEARN, boy, from me what dwells in man alone,
Courage immortal, and the steadfast sway
Of patient toil, that glorifies the day.
What most ennobles life is all our own,
Yet not the whole of life ; the fates atone
For what they give by what they keep away.
Learn thou from others all the triumphs gay
That dwell in sunnier realms, to me unknown.
Each soul imparts one lesson ; each supplies
One priceless secret that it holds within.
In your own heart — there only — stands the prize.
Foiled of all else, your own career you win.
We half command our fates ; the rest but lies
In that last drop which unknown powers fling in.

CROSSED SWORDS

MY grandsire fought for England, sword in hand ;
My other grandsire joined in high debate,
To free a nation and to mould the State.

Within my blood the two commingled stand,
Yielding this heart, still true to its own land,
A mingled heritage of love and hate.
The peevish pens of London cannot prate
So coarsely, but I feel the eternal band
That binds me, England, to thy low-hung shore,
Thy dainty turf, smooth stream, and gentle hill,
So alien from our spaces vast and wild.
Were England dying, at her cannon's roar,
I think my grandsire's sword would stir and thrill,
Though when this land lay bleeding, England smiled.

AN OUTDOOR KINDERGARTEN

O MISTS that loiter, vague and wild,
Along the enchanted stream,
Come lend your lesson to my child,
And teach her how to dream.

O wood-thrush, murmuring tender lays
From pine-tree depths above,
Make her thy pupil all her days,
And teach her how to love.

Thou oriole, in thy blithesome chant
A fearless counsel give;

Thy brave and joyous influence grant,
And teach her how to live.

And guard her, Nature, till she bears,
These forest paths along,
A heart more joyous than thine airs,
And fresher than thy song.

DIRGE

A SCOTTISH ECHO

HEART of the oak-grain, full of trembling love
(Oh and alas-a-day, oh and alas-a-day !),
Glad eyes that looked around, within, above,
(Ten thousand times good-night, and peace for thee !)

Up the long hillside through the moonlit glade
(Oh and alas-a-day, oh and alas-a-day !),
Serene and pure, thine innocent steps have strayed
(Ten thousand times good-night, and love for thee !) ;

But now released at length from life's low glen
(Oh and alas-a-day, oh and alas-a-day !),
Where shall thy paths be when we meet again ?
(Ten thousand times good-night, and heaven for thee !)

THE MADONNA DI SAN SISTO

[These verses, written and published at the age of nineteen, are here preserved, partly from their association with my dear old friend and college teacher, Professor Longfellow, who liked them well enough to include them in his "Estray," in 1847.]

Look down into my heart,
Thou holy Mother, with thy holy Son!
Read all my thoughts, and bid the doubts depart,
And all the fears be done.

I lay my spirit bare,
O blessèd ones! beneath your wondrous eyes,
And not in vain; ye hear my heartfelt prayer,
And your twin-gaze replies.

What says it? All that life
Demands of those who live, to be and do, —
Calmness, in all its bitterest, deepest strife;
Courage, till all is through.

Thou Mother! in thy sight
Can aught of passion or despair remain?
Beneath those eyes' serene and holy light
The soul is bright again.

Thou Son! whose earnest gaze
Looks ever forward, fearless, steady, strong;

Beneath those eyes no doubt or weakness stays,
Nor fear can linger long.

Thanks, that to my weak heart
Your mingled powers, fair forms, such counsel give.
Till I have learned the lesson ye impart,
I have not learned to live.

And oh, till life is done
Of your deep gaze may ne'er the impression cease!
Still may the dark eyes whisper, "Courage! On!"
The mild eyes murmur, "Peace!"

POEMS FROM "THALATTA"

[The two poems which follow are from a volume called "Thalatta; a book for the Sea-side," edited by my friend Samuel Longfellow and myself in 1853.]

I.

CALM.

'T is a dull, sullen day, — the dull beach o'er
In rippling curves the ebbing ocean flows;
Along each tiny crest that nears the shore
A line of soft green shadow rises, glides, and goes.

The tide recedes, — the flat smooth beach grows
bare,
More faint the low sweet plashing on my ears,
Yet still I watch the dimpling shadows fair,
As each is born, glides, pauses, disappears.

What channel needs our faith except the eyes?
God leaves no spot of earth unglorified;
Profuse and wasteful, lovelinesses rise;
New beauties dawn before the old have died.

Trust thou thy joys in keeping of the Power
Who holds these faint soft shadows in His
hand;
Believe and live, and know that hour by hour
Will ripple newer beauty to thy strand.

II.

THE MORNING MIST.

The mist that like a dim soft pall was lying,
Mingling the gray sea with the low gray sky,
Floats upward now; the sunny breeze is sigh-
ing,
And Youth stands pale before his destiny:
O passionate heart of Youth!
Each rolling wave with herald voice is crying;
Thou canst delay, but never shun replying,

It calls thee living or it calls thee dying,
Though beauty fade before the glare of truth.

Thou wanderest onward 'neath the solemn morning,
It seems like midday ere the sun rides high,
The soft mist fades, whose shadowy adorning
Wrapt in a dreamy haze the earth and sky;
The Ocean lies before!
Oh thou art lost if thou discard the warning
To make hot Day more fair than fairest dawning,
Till eve look back serenely on the morning
When Youth stood trembling on the ocean-shore.

THE FEBRUARY HUSH

Snow o'er the darkening moorlands, —
Flakes fill the quiet air;
Drifts in the forest hollows,
And a soft mask everywhere.

The nearest twig on the pine-tree
Looks blue through the whitening sky,
And the clinging beech-leaves rustle
Though never a wind goes by.

But there 's red on the wildrose berries,
And red in the lovely glow
On the cheeks of the child beside me,
That once were pale, like snow.

JUNE

She needs no teaching, — no defect is hers;
She stands in all her beauty 'mid the trees.
'Neath the tall pines her golden sunshine stirs
And shifts and trembles with each passing breeze.
All the long day upon the broad green boughs
Lieth the lustre of her lovely life,
While too much drugged with rapture to carouse
Broods her soft world of insect-being rife.
So without effort or perplexing thought
She comes to claim all homage as her own,
Clad in the richest garments Nature wrought,
Melting the strongest with her magic zone.
O wondrous June! our lives should be like thee,
With such calm grace fulfilling destiny.

S. L. H.

HYMNS

[Three of these hymns were written at about the age of twenty-two, and were published anonymously in a collection edited by my friends Samuel Longfellow and Samuel Johnson. They are here inserted mainly because they have secured for themselves a semblance of permanent vitality in hymn-books, and are not always correctly printed. The fourth was an occasional hymn written a year or two later.]

I.

I WILL ARISE AND GO UNTO MY FATHER.

To Thine eternal arms, O God,
Take us, Thine erring children, in:
From dangerous paths too boldly trod,
From wandering thoughts and dreams of sin.

Those arms were round our childish ways,
A guard through helpless years to be;
Oh leave not our maturer days,
We still are helpless without Thee!

We trusted hope and pride and strength:
Our strength proved false, our pride was vain,
Our dreams have faded all at length, —
We come to Thee, O Lord, again!

A guide to trembling steps yet be!
Give us of Thine eternal powers!
So shall our paths all lead to Thee,
And life smile on like childhood's hours.

II.

THE HOPE OF MAN.

THE Past is dark with sin and shame,
The Future dim with doubt and fear;
But, Father, yet we praise Thy name,
Whose guardian love is always near.

For man has striven, ages long,
With faltering steps to come to Thee,
And in each purpose high and strong
The influence of Thy grace could see.

He could not breathe an earnest prayer,
But Thou wast kinder than he dreamed,
As age by age brought hopes more fair,
And nearer still Thy kingdom seemed.

But never rose within his breast
A trust so calm and deep as now;
Shall not the weary find a rest?
Father, Preserver, answer Thou!

'T is dark around, 't is dark above,
But through the shadow streams the sun;
We cannot doubt Thy certain love;
And Man's true aim shall yet be won!

III.

PANTHEISM AND THEISM.

No human eyes Thy face may see,
No human thought Thy form may know;
But all creation dwells in Thee,
And Thy great life through all doth flow!

And yet, O strange and wondrous thought!
Thou art a God who hearest prayer,
And every heart with sorrow fraught
To seek Thy present aid may dare.

And though most weak our efforts seem
Into one creed these thoughts to bind,
And vain the intellectual dream
To see and know the Eternal Mind, —

Yet Thou wilt turn them not aside
Who cannot solve Thy life divine,
But would give up all reason's pride
To know their hearts approved by Thine.

So, though we faint on life's dark hill,
And thought grow weak, and knowledge flee,
Yet faith shall teach us courage still,
And love shall guide us on to Thee!

IV.

HYMN SUNG AT THE GRADUATING EXERCISES OF CAMBRIDGE DIVINITY SCHOOL, HARVARD UNIVERSITY, 1847.

To veil Thy truth by darkening or by hiding :
To stand irresolute or shrink appalled ;
To deal vague words of customary chiding,
Father ! to no such work Thy voice has called.

Our eyes are dim, yet can we see the duty.
Our souls are weak, yet can we shun the wrong.
'T is not in vain that here amid the beauty
Of Thy deep teachings we have stayed so long.

Some wounds are turned to pearls ; some limbs offending
We have had strength to seize and rend away ;
Some passionate earthly songs are changed in ending
To choral anthem and triumphant lay.

To build 'mid gentle hearts Thy church, the peerless ;
To speak the truth in love, whate'er befall ;

To make our brothers humble, tireless, fearless; —
This is the work to which Thy spirit calls.

Some seeds we sow may blossom into flowers
And those yield fruit to ripen 'neath Thy sun,
And Thou wilt bear these trembling hearts of ours
On to that peace where aim and deed grow one.

SAPPHO'S ODE TO APHRODITE

Ποικιλόθρον', ἀθάνατ' Ἀφρόδιτα.

BEAUTIFUL-THRONED, immortal Aphrodite!
Daughter of Zeus, beguiler! I implore thee
Weigh me not down with weariness and anguish,
O thou most holy!

Come to me now! if ever thou in kindness
Hearkenedst my words, — and often hast thou hearkened,
Heeding, and coming from the mansion golden
Of thy great Father,

Yoking thy chariot, borne by thy most lovely
Consecrated birds, with dusky-tinted pinions,

Waving swift wings from utmost heights of heaven
Through the mid-ether;

Swiftly they vanished, leaving thee, O Goddess!
Smiling, with face immortal in its beauty,
Asking why I grieved, and why in utter longing
I had dared call thee;

Asking what I sought, thus hopeless in desiring,
'Wildered in brain, and spreading nets of passion —
Alas, for whom? and saidst thou, "Who has harmed thee?
O my poor Sappho!

"Though now he flies, ere long he shall pursue thee;
Fearing thy gifts, he too in turn shall bring them;
Loveless to-day, to-morrow he shall woo thee,
Though thou shouldst spurn him."

Thus seek me now, O holy Aphrodite!
Save me from anguish, give me all I ask for, —
Gifts at thy hand! And thine shall be the glory,
Sacred Protector!

FORWARD

FROM THE GERMAN OF HOFFMANN VON FALLERSLEBEN

It is a time of swell and flood ;
We linger on the strand,
And all that might to us bring good
Lies in a distant land.

Oh, forward ! forward ! why stand still ?
The tide will not run dry ;
Who in the flood ne'er venture will,
That land shall never spy.

NATURE'S CRADLE-SONG

FROM THE GERMAN OF RÜCKERT

"Dreimal mit dem weissen Kleide."

Thrice with winter's whitest snows
Has thy mother decked thy bed,
Thrice 'mid summer's loveliest glows
Twined green garlands o'er thy head,
Asking yet uncomforted,
"Still thy slumber art thou keeping ?"
— Thou art still in cradle sleeping.

Thrice have come the soft spring showers
Where thy quiet form reposes ;
Thrice have blown the snowdrop flowers,
Thrice the violets, thrice the roses,
Murmuring oft with sweetest closes,
"Still thy soul in slumber steeping ?"
— Thou art still in cradle sleeping.

Thrice three hundred nights and morrows
Moon and sun have watched thy dreaming ;
Now they look with ceaseless sorrows
O'er thee once with rapture gleaming ;
Silent asks their steadfast beaming,
"Comes no light through darkness creeping ?"
— Thou art still in cradle sleeping.

Thrice spring zephyrs in their flowing
Soft have rocked thee to repose ;
Thrice rude Boreas, wilder blowing ;
Every wind thy slumber knows,
Striving, while the season goes,
Which shall hold thee in his keeping.
— Thou art still in cradle sleeping.

SONNETS FROM CAMOENS

[Mrs. Browning in "Catarina to Camoens" represents her as bequeathing him the ribbon from her hair; but she in reality gave it to him during her life as a substitute for the ringlet for which he pleaded.]

(42.)

"Lindo e subtil trançado, que ficaste."

O RIBBON fair, that dost with me remain
In pawn for that sweet gift I do deserve,
If but to win thee makes my reason swerve,
What were it if one ringlet I could gain?
Those golden locks thy circling knots restrain,
Locks whose bright rays might well for sunbeams serve,
When thou unloosest each fair coil and curve,
Oh is it to beguile, or slay with pain?
Dear ribbon, in my hand I hold thee now;
And were it only to assuage my grief,
Since I can have thee only, cling to thee,
Yet tell her, thou canst never fill my vow,
But in the reckoning of love's fond belief
This gift for that whole debt a pledge shall be.

"For we had been reading Camoens, — that poem, you remember,
Which his lady's eyes were praised in, as the sweetest ever seen."
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

(186.)

"Os olhos onde o casto Amor ardia."

THOSE eyes from whence chaste love was wont to glow,
And smiled to see his torches kindled there;
That face within whose beauty strange and rare
The rosy light of dawn gleamed o'er the snow;
That hair, which bid the envious sun to know
His brightest beams less golden rays did wear;
That pure white hand, that gracious form and fair:
All these into the dust of earth must go.
O perfect beauty in its tenderest age!
O flower cut down ere it could all unfold
By the stern hand of unrelenting death!
Why did not Love itself quit earth's poor stage,
Not because here dwelt beauty's perfect mould,
But that so soon it passed from mortal breath?

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